

RE-ECHOES
FROM
COONDAMBO

ROBERT BRUCE

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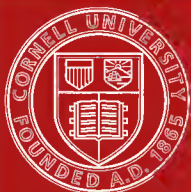
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Yours Truly
Rob. Bruce

Re-Echoes from Coondambo

By
Robert Bruce

Author of
"Benbonuna," "Reminiscences of an Old Squatter," etc



London
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DEDICATION.

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO MY WIFE
AS THE TRUEST FRIEND I POSSESS.

ROBT. BRUCE.

TO MY READERS.

I HAVE named this book "Re-Echoes from Coondambo" to distinguish it from its predecessor, "Echoes from Coondambo," now out of print. In the present volume, while retaining most of the contents of "The Echoes," I have added a considerable amount of new matter, while in order to suit, if possible, the prevailing taste for *galloping rhymes*, I have reconstructed several of the old pieces. I think it will be patent to observant readers that my aim has been to present life-like pictures in these pages rather than to pose as a poet, and I trust they will be able *to fancy they see the scenes described*. I have every reason to believe that the "Echoes" met with a large amount of favour from the reading public of South Australia, to whom till now my books have alone been offered. I may say that when a young man I made a long East Indian voyage *before the mast*, and since then a good many sea trips both in sailing vessels and steamers as passenger, consequently sea life is nearly as familiar to me as that of the bush. That I ought to know from long experience all the phases of a bush life the notices which follow by the two leading South Australian Journals will prove, and I have only to add that I trust HOME readers who take the trouble to peruse the "Re-Echoes" will be interested and amused.

I am, &c.,

ROBT. BRUCE.

AUTHOR'S CORRECTIONS.

Page 3, last line, for "Those dusky gangs" read "Then dusky gangs."

Page 42, line 1, for "In a very" read "In very."

Page 57, line 10, for "A wager is laid" read "A wager he's laid."

Page 81, last line, for "'Neath every" read "'Neath ev'ry."

Page 88, line 21, for "I mean scrubby" read "but yon scrubby."

Page 93, line 4, for "dolphin and seamew" read "Dolphin and Seamew."

Page 139, line 3, for "*re* Noah and the vine," read "*re* Noah and vine."

Page 149, line 8, for "The saddest heart" read "Of saddest heart."

Page 179, line 16, for "Yet I remarked" read "yet still remarked."

Page 209, line 28, for "and for market stock but too" read "and market stock but all too."

Page 219, line 1, for "With thick masses" read "With thicker masses."

Page 220, line 3, for "raindrops fingered" read "raindrop fingered."

Page 397, line 2, for "her lofty taper" read "ber taut and taper."

NOTE.—As the word *iron* to my ear will not sound rhythmically, except as one of two syllables, I always use it as such. Perhaps over many pieces in this book are marked "Air, Bonny Dundee," but it is my favourite measure, and one that I find lends itself most readily as a vehicle of description. Of course, there is no reason why any irrepressible Harris amongst my readers should not surfeit musical tea parties with the said pieces, but I do not expect or wish him to do so.

ROBT. BRUCE.

PRESS NOTICES.

A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOVEL.—Messrs. W. K. Thomas & Co. have published a new novel entitled “Benbonuna : A Tale of the Fifties,” for Mr. Robert Bruce, the well-known squatter, and have sent us a copy for review. The fact that this work of fiction has already been published in *The Evening Journal* will doubtless be accepted by judicious readers as a sort of hallmark attesting its possession of merit. On account of his literary style Mr. Bruce has been termed “The Rolf Boldrewood of South Australia,” and it is in no excess of compliment that we express the opinion that few, if any, of Mr. Browne’s writings excel in literary quality the best of Mr. Bruce’s. The latter, moreover, has the additional advantage of being a poet as well as a prose writer. Even those who may be disposed to question the justice of the comparison made herein will not cavil at the proposition that few men in any part of the colonies know more of bush life than the author of “Benbonuna.” The mysterious solitudes of the interior of the Australian Continent are an open book to him, and in this romance of his he reveals to those in less fortunate circumstances some of the invaluable knowledge which he gained while enduring the privations and vicissitudes of a pastoral pioneer’s life. The work is full of what is known as local colour, and if the plot contains nothing particularly sensational it is very human and very faithful alike to life and to nature. We confidently advise our readers to purchase “Benbonuna.”—*The Register* (Adelaide, South Australia), March 17th, 1900.

Messrs. W. K. Thomas & Co., the publishers, have sent us a copy of the latest work of Mr. Robert Bruce, author of “Benbonuna” and “Echoes from Coondambo.” It contains the “Reminiscences of an Old Squatter.” Mr. Bruce’s first entry into Port Augusta was on a hot morning in January, 1858, and since then he resided almost continuously in the Far North until his removal

to Adelaide a few months ago. No one knows more of pastoral life in the country where his station was situated than does Mr. Bruce, and as he possesses a charming style he is able to make his narrative exceedingly interesting. His book abounds in humour, and it also contains a large amount of useful information, while interspersed among the more solid relations are many poetical effusions, for Mr. Bruce is an expert in rhyme as in ordinary prose. There are now very few of the old *régime* of pastoralists left in Australia, but these reminiscences call up many pleasing memories of those ancient days when the Burra was accounted "Far North," and when the areas as wheat-growing districts had not been heard of.—*The Advertiser* (Adelaide, South Australia), March 15, 1902.



Re-Echoes from Coondambo



THE HUNT OF THE MANAWIRTA COODLA.¹

INTRODUCTION.

Where now than you, a kangaroo, grown reader, is much
smaller,

In prehistoric times they grew till bulkier and taller ;
Indeed, gigantic was their size. See skeletons discovered
On Callabonna's famous lake, which were for ages covered
By saline grime that in this clime oft takes the place of
howie,²

And so the name, from Nigs obtain, (up here) of mucca
cowie.

Now, mucca me your time will waste, but start at once my
story—

That deals with monster kangaroo—I got from legend hoary.
So stretch your ears. I mean, prepare with grain of salt, to
swallow

A narrative of hunting field, which beats all others hollow.

¹ 1. Manawirta Coodla—Very big kangaroo. 2. Howie or cowie—water.

FYTTE I.

Quoth Ooratunga's stalwart King, unto his dusky henchmen,
 "Since record drought, 'tis hard to find fit game on which
 to trench men,

For tho' we stumble now and then on wardoo,¹ 'tis a buppa²
 That certainly would scarce suffice for fifty strong men's
 supper ;

While all the *manawirta* ones are bogged in Callabonna,³
 As fatal to the famished brutes as dose of belladonna ;
 But then, before the drought broke up, they lived on sticks
 and water,

And therefore, save as bone mill grist, would barely pay for
 slaughter.

But with this grass on saltbush flat, in watercourse, and
 gutter,

If *only* they were living *now* they'd all be fat as butter."

"My worde !" "Him bin *big* one fat !" "Me plenty like
 to eat 'em !"

As interjected here, will show how Callabons would treat
 'em.

"The Tacta,⁴ doubt you, gentlemen"—His Majesty con-
 tinues—

"You've lately run far more to *teeth*, than useful bones and
 sinews ;

But listen, now, there's little left of wobma⁵ with the body
 Of bulky wirra,⁶ which I slew with boomerang and waddy ;

1. Wardoo—wombat. 2. Buppa—little. 3. Callabouna—lake where great
 fossil bones were found. 4. Tacta—devil or devils. 5. Wobma—carpet snake.
 6. Wirra—gum tree.

At least, no saddle joint is left to please our royal eye, sirs—
It lives again in momerty;¹ besides, 'tis rather high, sirs,
So leaving it for wocalla,² for wildoo,³ and for weepa,⁴
We'll slay the last big coodla left—that spring-heeled
 gnoorie⁵ leaper.

Yes, Ikey Mo', of Palestine—for Solomon gold buying—
Arrived in broken-winded state, averring he'd been flying
From kangaroo that, to his view, topp'd easily creation—
For spread of ears, for length of tail, and total elevation.
You know the rest—old Ikey Mo' was fat, and over forty;
We therefore kindly *took him in*—when *hungry* we're not
 haughty.

Well, now he's *gone*, and 'tis a case of hunting will I, nil I,
So rouse those lazy varlets up, my faithful Bardoo Billy.⁶

All slowly rise the Ooratungs, in garbs of grease and ashes,
With yawns that open up their heads like thrown-wide
 window sashes;
They rub their eyes, they scratch their heads, and stretch
 like thriving cattle,
Yet seem too tight about the chest for chase of game or
 battle.
But, hunt again, must those wild men, or dine off Jew too-
 tender
To be fit meat for blacks to eat, or cross a kitchen fender.
So, grasping toes on long spears close to save distressful
 bending,
Those dusky gangs, with boomerangs and figures still un-
 bending,

1. Momerty—gentles. 2. Wocalla—crows. 3. Wildoo—Eagle or Eagles.
4. Weepa—Ants. 5. Gnoorie—silver wattle. 6. Bardoo Billy—Meat Billy.

Troop off into the forest near of eucalypts primeval,
Like swart, uncanny, brood of him—the Father of all evil.

“Manawirta Coodla,
Tura¹ plenty ketch 'em !
Plenty kill 'em, cut 'em up ;
To the wurleys fetch 'em.
Plenty lubra eat 'em—
Pickaninny too ;
Plenty *big* corroboree
Long o' Moolooloo.”

Like feline concert highly pitched, when Tib to Tom is
calling,
This hymn into the atmosphere is hurled in squalls ap-
palling
By toothless hags whose skins, like bags, hang o'er their
frames too loosely—
For time, you know, long, long ago, has wrinkled them
profusely.
And so the lot like huge toads squat, their poolkas² near
them sprawling,
While crows hop round, on plunder bound, by pickaniunies
crawling.
It is a scene, right well I ween, to eyes aud nose affecting,
And so we'll haste to hunt that beast and leave them camp
protecting.

“ But hark to that banging ! that ponderous clanging !
Like din of huge hammers when pounding away

1. Tura—blackfellow. 2. Poolka—old man.

On mass hot and chunky, or that of steam monkey,
When driving a pile down in Wallaroo Bay ;
But only far faster. By Jingo ! my master !
That coodla, it must be ! 'tis coming this way !
O ! if he should drop on us, that is, should hop on us,
Ramm'd out of sight we will be in the clay.

Here, slip round this gum-tree, and whate'er may come, be
As cool as a cucumber, ready to dodge
His toenails and cadley,¹ that tear and bang badly
When he from tight corners a foe would dislodge ;
And now, without lying, you'd swear he was flying,
As over those mulgas and myalls he sails.
Just look, how he's going ! while blackfellows, blowing,
Through cuticles sodden, pour sweat by the pails.

There's Pooteperunta—a ring-tailed old hunter—
He's leading the niggers, altho' about done,
While royal Pangiltie, who runs with Ooliltie,
Already has had quite enough of the fun,
So roars out "Coo !² Coolga, wandinga !³ A mulga
Might just as well try up to Tintoo⁴ to grow,
As we, by still running, to capture that cunning
Old Coodla, so off to the wurlies we'll go."

Where now the springy step ? the poise
Of ochered head ? the glutton's joys ?
Ah, where ?

1. Cadley—tail. 2. Coo—equivalent to Ho ! 3. Coolga, wandinga—stop that's enough. 4. Tintoo—the sun.

Those dusky hunters homeward go
 Like funeral procession—slow ;
 For bare
 Are brawny backs, which now should bend
 'Neath provender for wife and friend
 To eat ;
 And who so long for grimey spoil—
 These niggers don't object to soil
 on meat—
 But, ah ! as they to camp draw near
 This discord rises shrill and clear.

“ Me *big* one hungry ;
 Me big one growl ;
No good that Pangiltie ;
 Me like wilkah¹ howl.
Eat 'em pickaninny
 S'pose 'em not get bardoo ;²
What for not catch coodla ?
 No good that one nardoo ! ”³

Here savage Pangiltie, who scowls thro' his miltie,
 Observes in a tone that is meant to convince—
 “ Just shut up that howling, or else there'll be growling ;
 I'll chop your old baggages up into mince ;
 'Tis time you were waddied, or well with spears prodded,
 So thank your kind stars that you're skinny and tough,
 For, *if* fit for cooking, and succulent looking,
 There'd be for the rest of us *bardoo* enough.

1. Wilkah—wild dog. 2. Bardoo—meat. 3. Nardo—very innutricious seed found in swamps.

Like terrified winkles those bundles of wrinkles
 Shrink into their shells, represented by skins,
 And even the poolkas, like timid old oolkas,¹
 Have never a word in defence of their gins ;
 That camp as if under a sky full of thunder
 Is scarcely the place to feel wholly at ease,
 For, lacking the carving, all hands are near starving,
 Excepting the insects we'll write down as fleas.

Each gin with small baby now mutters, " He'll, may be,
 Just order my darling by way of a snack ;
 I'll give it its gnummie,² and then if 'tis dumb, he
 May *not*, in the darkness, get on to its track.
 Yes, things at low water are now in this quarter,
 With never a *halfcaste* of eatable age
 To tide over matters, in " toad-in-hole " batters,
 So, reader, we'll turn to a livelier page.



FYTTE II.

A fierce dust is rising, in manner surprising—
 It rushes and whirls on the furious blast,
 Till wretched old niggers—deplorable figures—
 All blind, and begrimed, on their beam-ends are cast.
 *Where, firmly believing their spooks will be leaving
 On dust bother'd pinions for regions unknown,

1. Oolkas—Kangaroo rats. 2. Gnummie—milk.

In a very heavy dust storm, in the great drought of '64, the natives told me "all about blackfellow and all about white fellow tumble down," and meant what they said. Blacks believe that their vital essences prowl about after death, with a predilection for old wurlies they occupied in life.—R.B.

They crouch with a stoical patience, heroical,
'Cause inside and out they're too *solid* to groan.

But sturdy Gerunta, tho' rarely a grunter,
Just hints 'tis Nick's weather and very own wind,
While royal Pangiltie and Doctor Pilliltie
Expectorate brickbats and bits of their mind,
Which last I'll not render in English, for tender
Young readers might find them a little *too* rough,
For even as mutter'd, sneez'd, cough'd up, and splutter'd,
The audience finds them quite risky enough.

But hark to that rumbling,
Electrical grumbling !
And mark ! through the dense dust huge storms drops are
tumbling,
Which, quicker, and quicker,
And thicker, and thicker,
Descend till the landscape is one sheet of liquor,
While creeks, lately dry,
Are all foaming bank high,
And lightning in zigzags is rending the sky—
Or rather, vast thunderclouds, rolling in masses,
Now blacker than tar lakes, now green as molasses,
While as for the natives, well, *barring their grease*,
They're clean when the rain stops and leaves them in
peace.

Now Tintoo shines out, as he does to this day,
A trifle too hotly, perhaps, by the way,

And, seeking for scraps of malodorous fare,
Some natives poke here, and some others poke there ;
But, just as late downpour washed cuticles clean,
It wisk'd off the bardoo, for none can be seen.
O! what can they forage? O! what shall they eat ?
Why, catch that big coodla, and bring home his meat.

“ Gnookaka ! gnookaka !¹ (plenty make haste)
If you the old gentleman's titbits would taste,
For country all boggy
Will make him go groggy ;
Now, Turas,² just help me to capthur the baste.”
Thus, bellows Pangiltie, as he with his toe
Is turning the ground as you would with a hoe ;
Till, scratching a boomerang up, then a spear,
He takes a long water—because there's no beer—
And, striding away, with his blackguards behind him,
Goes after big coodla, determined to find him.

That kangaroo clings to a eucalypt trunk
As if 'twere a lamppost, and he very drunk ;
But do not suppose the great beast has been drinking,
He's merely afraid in the mud he'll be sinking.

Just look how his ears
Wave about, when appears
That cannibal concourse, and see how he clears,
Or, rather, attempts to 'scape from his foes ;
His toes thro' the mud sink, he sprawls on his nose,
Then, staggers up wildly, his hindlegs thrown wide,
But loses much time ere he gets to his stride,

1. Gnookaka—make haste, hurry. 2. Turas—blackfellows.

And then, well, no tree-tops he'll fly in his way,
Too bothered is he by the fast-clinging clay.

Still, knowing full well how his swart foes will treat him,
He firmly resolves that the varments shan't eat him ;
So bounds at his best, with his tail upward jerking,
The while, nasty bog holes, he tries to be shirking.

But all is in vain,

For his enemies gain,

As *thin crust he sinks thro'* their weight will sustain ;
Besides, though he clears quite ten yards at a hop,
His strength is fast failing—he'll soon have to stop.

Hooroo ! Be the powers ! Whoop ! Now thin ye turas,
Like warrachies run, an' we'll have him as sure as
Wildoo can wheel high, an' thin, me bould gluttons,
We'll bulge out our vests, till we start all the buttons ;
Be jabers, we're impty enough just at prisent,
So, go it ye divils, an' thry to look plisant.
Thus monarch of old, with his black skin bespattered,
To equally mud-begrimed brigands, who scattered
For miles in the rear—say a couple, at least—
Are doggedly bent upon skin filling feast.

Now, hurry up rodent, and don't wait to pick
The clay from your cadley ;¹ 'twill e'en have to stick,
For close on your quarters Queen Yertamaruka,²
Who takes at a meal what would sink a feluca,
Runs just as if coupled with sweat-drench'd Pangiltie,
The pair of them plastered all over with miltie,³

1. Cadley—tail. 2. Yertamaruka—big breasts. 3. Miltie—red ochre mixed with fat and whites of eggs.

While, *certainly not* from sweet Mitcham, in Surrey,
Came perfume their majesties *waste in their hurry* ;
Unless by mistake, and from aught but the true bin,
The stuff had been sent out by Piesse & Lubin ;
But, barring their bouquets, the right royal couple
Are fitter than fiddles—than hickories supple,
And soon, with a perfect tornado of bangs,
Will beat out your brains with their big boomerangs ;
Besides, half their subjects are hard on their tracks,
Like bees, and will cover your body with whacks,
While even the yowries¹ and poolkas are there,
And mumble their gums at the thought of such fare.
The umetas,² too, all as naked as sin,
And yackerties,³ do, their trebles join in
With general hub-bub and hull-a-baloo—
For gold by the chaldron I would not be you.

With lab'ring breath and panting sides,
What rage and fear within hfs heart
That diprote feels, and then, besides,
Behind he feels a stinging smart,
For Pooteperunta, who comes with a rush,
Is running hands down, well in front of the crush,
And jabbing his spear—he's too shaky to throw it—
Gets in a smart stab, while his comrades cry "go it."
This seems to encourage the fugitive most,
For, leaving behind him malodorous host
As if he had run all his field to standstil,
He crosses a plain and pops over a sandhill,

1. Yowrie—old wowan. 2. Umetas—little girls. 3. Yackerties—little boys.

And now he has hopped where no tracker can find him,
 Though plain as **Great Primer** his prints show
 behind him.

Round "Eat-em-up-hole" is a pretty to do,
 For niggers—all staring—have nothing in view,
 Save shallow flood waters that cover the mud,
 And, floating upon them, a few spots of blood,
 For swallowed in toto, and still sinking deeper
 In nature's own birdlime, is late gnoorie leaper ;
 And there will his bones lie till Big-wig, delighted,
 Shall dig out, describe them, and likely be knighted ;
 While as for Pangiltie and rest of choice cannibals,
 They dined, I believe, on some old and uncanny pals.

Some terrible people discredit the bible,
 And, therefore, as fabulous, this tale may libel,
 So let me here state, that of aboriginal
 Legend I luckily hold the original
 Boomerang tablets, whose hieroglyphical
 Characters surely would cause hypercritical
 Savants to hold up their hands, and in chorus
 Cry, "Dear me ! *he's right* ! there's the whole thing be-
 fore us."



HOW I DID NOT CATCH THAT DINGO.

A TRUE STORY.

When young and lusty, long ago,
 Away to Northern station,
I in my travels chanced to go,
 And chose the avocation
Of overseer ; or rather Frank—
 The gay and fearless—chose me
To share in many a wicked prank,
 As sage reflection shows me.

But there, when life's red fluid runs
 In youthful veins like winking,
We act like other heedless ones—
 To old age leave the thinking.
Yes, jolly times with jolly boys
 Had I on grand old run then,
Red letter days replete with joys,
 Or rather reckless fun then.

I hunted sheep of every sort,
 I hunted shepherds lazy,
And if you fancy that was sport
 You hug a notion hazy.
I hunted bullocks, calves, and cows
 In "fats" or "branding" muster,
Got many a scratch from mulga boughs,
 With now and then a buster.

And then one blazing Sabbath-day
I rode away to break it,
But just in common bushland way,
And much as bushmen take it.
For like as not if asked to name
The day, as lass by beau, sir,
Your answer would be much the same,
"I'm sure I do not know, sir."

But wasting time you'll say am I,
So promptly to my story
I'll turn, and state that sailing high
Sol shone with too much glory,
In cloudless arch of brilliant blue,
And deluged with caloric
The landscape sere of saddest hue,
Where only flies might frolic.

When I old Teaser told to stand,
And soon the good horse saddled,
To hunt, as I o'er night had planned,
Two steers that had skedaddled
From Humpy Bill, who swore they were—
In bushland phraseology—
A somewhat wild and useless pair.
I'll skip his lame apology

For losing them, and merely say
My way I quickly wended
To broken range some miles away,
Delightfully attended

By countless flies that sang in air,
Or soothed me when they'd settle
To tangle in my ears or hair,
And sting like boyhood's nettle.

I wished a million Nero's then
Off legs and wings were hauling
From filthy pests, or other men
Monopolised their crawling.
But ah ! they plagued me with a will
And skill for irritating,
Until I saw on wooded hill
Some cattle ruminating.

And with them there those vagrants lay—
The cause of Sabbath breaking ;
A whistling snort, and then away,
O'er ground to hoof strokes quaking.
The mob dashed off at racing pace,
Heads up and tails outstreaming,
But Teaser just devoured space
O'er boulders hotly gleaming.

Past jutting rocks, through blind creek beds,
And mulgas, all went crashing,
Till soon that pair of quadrupeds
With stockwhip I was lashing,
When swiftly swerving here and there,
Together then I got them,
And, keeping up their headlong bat,
From out the mob I shot them.

But presently on sylvan track
I had them fairly steady,
Just thinking how, when I got back,
I should be more than ready
For damper, beef, and boiled black tea—
Fit pabulum for emu,
Which then right well agreed with me,
Who'd relish e'en a seamew.

Thirst next thing occupied my mind,
And, quite resolved on drinking,
I turned towards a creek to find
The beverage—when, slinking,
Red dingo met my startled sight
As, trotting close behind us,
He really seemed delighted quite
As company to find us.

From burning thirst his eyes were red,
His tongue far down was hanging ;
Said I, " I'll knock you on the head
No sheep, henceforth, a fang in
Shall you, my friend, for bloodshed stick ;
And barring, say, a buster,
My heels upon your hide I'll kick,
Your tail shall be a duster."

Old Teaser needed not the spur
Or whip-thong on him falling
Too bent was he to catch that cur,
And soon was overhauling

The squatter's foe, that now lay out
To make the gum creek winding,
'Beneath its broken bank, no doubt,
A hole intent on finding.

He gained the creek, but close behind
We on his footsteps followed,
No cover he had time to find
In bank or gum tree hollowed ;
So out again on open plain
He bounded with a rattle,
I thinking not to tighten rein
Nor glance round for my cattle,

But went as fast as Teaser could,
And evidently faster
Than all poor wilka's¹ members would
Then carry off their master.
" Hurrah ! hurrah ! we've got him now,
As sure as eggs are eggs, sir."
He doubles back it seems, somehow,
'Twixt Teaser's very legs, sir.

Now both again, at tip top speed,
For very life are racing,
And Teaser, with the greater greed,
The dingo is outpacing,
But headlong over ugly bank
Of great creek, all are diving,
We ranging on the varment's flank,
When 'mongst the stones arriving.

1. Native name for dingo.

Hand over hand we're gaining ground,
My stock whip I am swinging
The wild dog's well mark'd ribs to pound^d
With thong strokes loudly ringing.
A few more strides old horse, and then
We'll give him his quietus ;
But ah ! into a bankside den
He bolts to fairly beat us.

Vexation ! only think of it !
When he was fairly beaten,
Just gathered fruit, of which a bit
The niggers might have eaten,
And yet might eat, if only I
From out that hole could poke him ;
At any rate I could but try,
Or, failing that, to smoke him.

From Teaser's back I blunder'd down,
My bridle reins neglecting,
Thus acting like a simple clown
Who grief might be expecting.
I saw that dog, no need of scent,
" This heavy stone will do him ! "
He bolted out, and off he went
And I could not pursue him.

Except afoot, for on the plain
My horse was slowly walking,
I felt that I might call in vain,
So started off horse stalking.

He led me here, he led me there,
At times I thought I'd caught him,
So sidled up, and spoke him fair,
Then hissed out what I thought him.

But all in vain, for trailing rein
His forelegs would not tangle ;
And soon I saw, with rage and pain,
For him I need not angle.
Yet still pursued him up and down
O'er hills and plains, too stony,
Till I, just 'ere the sun went down
Near knocked up 'Shanks' pony !

For by that time the heat and flies
Had made me sad and weary ;
While perspiration filled my eyes
Till smarting much and bleary.
My feet were sore, my thorax dry,
Habiliments all soaking ;
Nine miles from home, and, by-the-by,
New boots ! and future joking !

To empty sheep hut standing nigh
I bent my way to forage,
And in the tank, unto my eye
Appeared some thin, warm porridge.
But how was I to get it out,
As nauseous draught to try it ?
There was no twine-hung tin about,
My boot would not reach nigh it.

Red hornets by the dozen flew
And dipped into the *water*,
While of their number not a few
Were victims to self-slaughter.
This did not much improve the look
Of pug in which they floated ;
But when you'd drink by hook or crook
Such trifles are not noted.

To shepherd's spouse that tank seemed small,*
To me far too capacious ;
No tap appeared in rusty wall,
A circumstance vexatious.
But then the orifice on top
Was round and fairly roomy,
I found my head it would not stop,
So muttered, "It will do me."

One arm, of course including wrist,
To head close pressed I thrust in,
And then with wriggle and with twist
My other shoulder burst in.
With legs like those on Manxman's coin,
Above the tank slow waving,
I quenched, as Denis would say, "foine,"
My awful thirsty craving.

* A 400-gallon tank of water had to suffice a shepherd's wife for all purposes for six weeks, hence she might be pardoned for not looking at the size of the tank in a similar light to myself. I may say here that those iron tanks were regular man traps, for I have heard of nearly a score of cases, including that of woman, in which thirsty people have been caught in their 13½-in. circular man-holes as I was. Of these, some few extricated themselves as I did, while others would have certainly perished had they not been rescued.

From stifling tank I tried to win
My shoulders—they said never ;
My trousers did not care a pin
If they waved there for ever.
I thought of ancient oaken chest,
With skeleton there lying ;
And though I soon might be “at rest ”—
I did not fancy dying.

My memory no well kept log
Was needed then to freshen ;
The past came back till shameless dog
Had caused my indiscretion.
For as when vivid lightning flash
Unveils the face of night, sir,
A fine ghost party gathered there
To add to my delight, sir.

My boyhood's song, “The Workhouse Boy,”
I did not then start humming ;
For me 'twas solemn, silent joy,
Save now and then for drumming
Of blucher heels on sounding tank
To prove myself still living ;
There was not then “Salvation Rank,”
And I was not thanksgiving.

It somehow popped into my mind
What trouble Frank might suffer
When he my sad remains should find,
And murmur, “Poor old buffer !”

But no good boards need wasted be
My gathered bones to bury,
A pickle case would do, you see,
Nailed roughly up by Jerry.

But "hang the pickle case," thought I,
When sense succeeded flurry ;
An iron berth I'll rather try,
From which a man may worry,
So trouser-band with fingers fleet
I downward tugged, and then, sir,
Much mud begrimed, regained my feet
And man-hole pass'd again, sir.

You bet ! I from that beastly tank
Incontinently hurried
Like bolting manager of bank,
Or widow to be married.
And when again in hot pursuit
I went of dodging dingo,
From Teaser's back I'd slay the brute,
Else let the thieving thing go.

'Twas late when I got home that night,
With never horse or cattle,
In awful dusty, draggled plight,
And how the boys did prattle !
I had a pair of blistered feet,
And suffered from dejection—
Like Æsop's dog, I'd drop'd the meat
To gain a vain reflection.

110° IN THE SHADE.

Alack ! this heat, with flying dust. Oh, dear !

'Tis much *too* near to burning fever's point.

Our parboil'd livers will be cook'd, I fear,

And all our functions roasted like a joint,

Save far too fluent one that doth anoint

Our sodden cuticles with perspiration,

Which might indeed be measur'd by the pint

And calls incessantly for perportation—

Successive liquid loans soon lost in liquidation.

Too hot for work, we therefore loll about

In coolest quarters handy to be found :

And here I'll hazard just a lurking doubt,

That mystic bourne, to which bad souls are bound

By Nick and Company to be well brown'd,

Can give a flamelet to this filthy place

On Torrens' border, where the gasping ground,

By open fissures in its drought-scarr'd face,

Gulps superheated air like fainting human race !

The dust-grimed bindings of the books curl up,

As if those volumes would some ass invite

To search their pages for refreshing sup

From learning's fount ; but who, with fly-vex'd sight,

Would leave the printing in a sorry plight,

By pouring on it perspiration's rains

In mighty splashes, like the pelting flight

Of hissing drops that rattle on the plain,

When Jupiter, as "Pluv," turns on his thunder main.

That cunning collie, in capacious hole
Scratch'd by himself beneath a leaky tank—
Forgetting sheep's head he so lately stole
And, crows to baffle, buried in a bank—
Tries hard to sleep, with slowly-heaving flank ;
His vertebræ too limp his tail to wag,
With founder'd oyster he might justly rank ;
For seedy swagsmen, flapping sweat-grimed rag,
May pass him slowly by with billycan and swag.

The panting fowls are gasping in the shade—
Their dingy plumage hanging loosely round—
While chanticleers, with warfare for their trade,
Mope side by side, and nothing now would hound
Them on to combat, or, indeed, to sound
The bumptious challenge with their bagpipes shrill.
Are these the warriors that strut the mound
For pullets' sake to gamely die or kill ?
Too *hot* it is for love—e'en jealousy is still !

That grim grimalkin on the earthen floor
Is surely dead, so motionless he lies ;
On musine race he'll fiercely pounce no more ;
But, *if* defunct, e'en death can't stand those flies,
For see, he clutches at his winking eyes
With sudden claw to scare those torments vile,
Which shirk the blow and all adroitly rise
On active wing to poise a little while,
Then settle swiftly down, the luckless cat to rile.

On listless ear sounds forth no songster's note
To break the stillness of oppressive air.
'Tis silent all, unless should sheep or goat
To water hurry with unhappy blare,
'Neath bushes dodging to avoid the glare
Of sultry Sol, who seeks to burn the lot,
And is as pleasant as a scalded bear.
But pause I *must* to take refreshing tot—
A *nasty* one I mean—the water's nearly hot.

Please take me straight to iceberg's leeward side,
But not *too* near it, for extremes are bad.
And here, I wonder that the dogs ne'er tried
To ease their sufferings by going mad,
But there, e'en rabid canines would be glad
To snap at flies and churn their venom'd slime
In cool shade couchant, for their harmless fad
Of biting legs, while breaking record time,
Too imbecile would be for madness in this clime.

To drown my thirst I'll deluge it with tea—
Of course you know, when *nothing* else remains ;
But, by-the-bye, it vastly puzzles me
How quickly *whisky* from a bottle wanes ;
The heated glass must certainly have drains
Through which the "blood of barleycorn" can ooze,
But *liquid problems overcome the brains*,
And so I'd aid them with refreshing snooze,
Did not each pore outpour the Hebrew widow's cruse.

HOW THE CITY MAN SPENT HIS CHRISTMAS IN THE BUSH.

What ! been spoiling my complexion ? Why, I fancied it
perfection ;

Quite like Tottie's, here, or Lottie's, shaded so that it
should score

Points against your parchments sallow (tinted to the tones
of tallow),

Tightly stretched on jaw-bones callow. Go up North and
try a splore—

Go and lubricate with Scotty ; drink, as I did, from his
store,

Till you're tight—then take no more.

You would hear me glibly telling how I found my new
friend's dwelling ;

How I, drinking—scarcely thinking—slept too soundly on
his floor ;

Slept as though (in draught mistaken) hemlock at the least
I'd taken ;

Slept as though I'd ne'er awaken till I woke for evermore ;

Looked like subject for a jury no true Justice might ignore.

Now we'll start at Scottie's door !

Saddle-sore, begrimed, and crusty from my ride on roads
too dusty,

I, benighted, was invited by a Scot at pine-hut door

To a shakedown in his shanty furnished in a manner
scanty—

Bunk, two stools, a table (anty), and a cupboard on the
floor—

Cupboard built of branded cases (cupboard toppers would
explore),

Padlocked like a bonded store.

While the slush-lamp flared and flickered Scotty brought a
bottle (wickered)

From that branded, strongly banded, cupboard with now
opened door,

Saying, in his rich Scotch lingo, "Will ye hae some richt
guid stingo?"

Which I thought it not, by Jingo! when he'd helped me
from his store—

When he'd helped me from big bottle (demijohn) and
offered *more!*

Quantum suff! I'd drank galore.

But, deriding my denial, Scotty urged *just* one more trial
Of that tangleleg—'twould strangle even Scotchmen by the
score—

Till I, pestered by his pleading, yielded to his *kind*
misleading—

Till I, though not bruised or bleeding, lay a corpse—which
yet might snore—

One more victim to the bottle, flattened out on flagstone
floor.

Ah! had I but drank no more!

Then at sunrise—when with splitting headache I was sadly
 sitting
 On a dusty, torn, and musty sheepskin on that shanty
 floor—
 Came a feeling o'er me stealing that no more I would have
 dealing
 In a bushland pub or sheeling. Here a solemn oath I
 swore—
 With such tippie hot from Tophet—burning brimstone
 Nick might pour—
“ Tangleleg I'd tope no more.”

But friend Scotty, sad old sot he, here advised “a wee
 sma' tot;” he
 Said 'twould mak me reicht, an' tak me—wi ma heid no
 langer soor—
 Till his neighbours, auld McSneishes, wha aye drank, like
 sauted feeshes
 Till they crackit croons like dishes—they wad hae me on
 the splore.*
 Would they? *Not* if splore meant stingo—*that* I'd tippie
 nevermore—
 Never ! never !! nevermore !!!

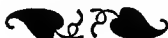
Did I visit Scottie's neighbours to prolong my Christmas
 labours—
 Tossing *mutchkins* off—not *cabers* ; did I join them in a
 splore?
 What a question ! *Am I not here?* Walker's mine—I see
 you've got beer.

* Splore is the Scotch expression for a heavy drinking bout.

Where's my *extra* special, Tot, dear? Glad I'm humming
round once more.

Now, boys, here's to good old Scotty, may his head be
never sore,

Barring from McSneishes' splore.



A SUNDOWNER'S PHILOSOPHY.

'Neath scorching blaze of solar rays
I rode at snail-slow pace,
While swarming flies beset my eyes
And sweat stream'd down my face.
The heat and glare were hard to bear—
I scarce my breath could draw—
When rugged man, with billy-can
And huge blue swag, I saw.

On dusty road, with bulky load,
A camel he might be.
He stopp'd, I stopp'd, his swag he dropp'd,
And thus accosted me—
“ 'Tis bloomin' hot, boss, hev yer got
Some water you cud spare ?
My bag's run out, and 'tis about
Ten miles 'fore I'll git there.”

Yes ; ten miles tramp had he to camp,
Where water he might find,
And so, altho' my bag was low,
I gave with anxious mind.
He wiped his mouth, and then his drouth,
With breathless draught dispell'd.
I viewed that bag with visage sad—
Scant water *then* it held.

- Said I, " My friend, how *can* you wend
Your way without a nag ? "
He lit his pipe and tried to wipe
His brow with tattered rag.
" Well, don't yer see," at length quoth he,
" I'm used to it, an' so
As I've no hoss I'm forced ter, boss,
On shank's hoss ter go.
- " Yer wants to know why does I go
In summer on the pad ?
Well, look here mate, yer see I hate
Them townships mighty bad.
Where you're run in, if you've some tin,
An' takes a drop or two,
An' gits it wuss fer bloomin' cuss—
I hates them chaps in blue !
- " Down *there* 'tis *work*—no blooming shirk
Them blokes 'll see yer do !
It's wusser here ? No bloomin' fear,
Tho'.seemin' so ter you.
Ter hump my swag an' tucker-bag
An' billy 's nought ter me ;
And when 'tis hot I biles ther pot
And camps 'neath shady tree."
- I wondered much how furnace such
As *he* called heat might feel,
And if, indeed, *more* fire he'd need
To cook *al fresco* meal ;

For certainly it seemed to me
One more degree e'en then
Would fry a steak, would bake a cake,
And fairly roast most men.

For it no doubt was he cut out,
And p'r'aps enjoyed it too,
Lacerta like—but then they'd strike
Against that load of blue.
Well, Providence gives evidence
Of adaptation wise,
And by it's plan this aimless man
Sustain'd the heat and flies.

For what, indeed, did Nature need
This homeless vagrant? What?
As sport for fate, with blacks to mate—
A pale-faced Hottentot?
Endurance, strength, of limb good length,
Rare physique—all had he;
Yet, with sole aim bare meals to claim—
Rags, "bacca," and black tea.

Yet, stay, for he a "bloomin' spree"
May now and then attain,
With shouting friend and poison's blend,
To shanty-keeper's gain.
Yes, still a tie with those of high
And low degree had he,
And e'en might sing like vinous king,
And better, too, maybe.

Across my mind the thoughts outlined
Pass'd rapidly, and I
Produced a flask, but did not ask
If he a drop would try—
I handed one. He said, "Here's fun—
No water—spiles it quite."
Then, with a twist of lip and wrist,
He hid it from my sight.

The reckless grin of harden'd sin
O'erspread his visage brown,
As on the road, like giant toad,
He straighway squatted down ;
One knee he bent, his weight then leant
Upon his heel behind,
And he, 'twas clear, if I would hear,
For yarning was inclined.

Then, just to show no pride, you know,
I also took a tot,
But did not care to swelter there
Upon that shadeless spot.
Yet e're I went, without intent
His confidence to gain,
He gave it me—as you shall see—
He hoped for one more drain !

"Yes ; Ill allow yer sees as how
The stages an' ther heat
Is much like work a cove can't shirk ;
I'm good, tho', on my feet ;

An' you can bet I mostly get
At outside camps a spell ;
The blokes, d'ye see, likes company,
An' allus treats me well.

“ Their masters, eh ? The *grub*, yer say ?
An ' 't isn't theirn to give' ?
Well, look here, Boss, they feels no loss,
An' all on us must live.
Besides, d'ye see, them boys maybe
'Ill hev ter pad ther hoof,
An' come ter *me* fer grub an' tea
When *I've* an old tin roof.

“ Me work, yer asts ? Not while *them* lasts !
But bloomin' boots wears out ;
So then a job to make a bob
I takes as 'knockabout.'
I don't stop long ? You're not far wrong ;
'Tain't likes o' me as stops—
The squatter's good, he finds the wood,
An' fries my bloomin' chops.

“ What'll I do when nearly thro',
An' I can't tramp no more ?
Well, that, d'ye see, don't trouble me,
I'm easy on that score.
The world to come ? Well, it, by gum !
Can't be much wuss nor here
For heat and flies ; and, blank my eyes,
I don't see nought to fear.”

I thought old Nick might likely kick
At lodgers such as he—
Such restless tramps, ungodly scamps,
And whales for strong black tea !
So then that flask—which, if a cask,
He'd squat before till dry—
Was *absently* concealed by me
From his beseeching eye.

I would not see his drift, so he
From bended knee arose,
Unheeding crust of clinging dust
On ragged nether clothes.
Then "slung" his swag, picked up his bag,
Said "So long"—I, "Good day."
'Midst glare and heat he plied his feet—
I, musing, rode away.



HOW HE PERISHED.

A TRUE TALE OF THE NOR'-WEST TABLELANDS.

The sunbeams fall with scorching heat on boulders gleaming grey,
Like time-worn tombs of ages dead 'neath mighty dome of day.
No living thing is heard or seen, no cloud is sailing high ;
No verdant tree to lend its shade or soothe the aching eye.

Whilst winding 'midst the saltbush sere, o'er lonely waste of
stones,
The rugged track is grimly mark'd by ghastly heaps of
bones—
By skeleton of steed and steer that died from drought and
toil ;
The awful aftermath of Death—his sternly gathered spoil.

On pinions strong the burning blast is rushing from the
North,
The willing slave of tyrant Drought, fierce agent of his
wrath :
But, ah ! a miserable man comes toiling o'er a rise ;
That ruthless wind, it seems to say, " Behold my helpless
prize !
Behold his empty waterbag ! Behold his fainting state !
No chance has he to foil me now—he staggers to his fate !
No water he may hope to reach, no kindly succour find ;
A desert grave for such as he, is cruel to be kind !"

His galling load the man lets fall, then staggers on again ;
He knows the road, but, oh, 'tis far to haunt of fellow men :
And bitterly of faults he thinks which he would fain forget,
But, conscience urged, his memory recalls them for regret ;
Too lightly he of folly thought—he weighs it justly now—
And sighs, as with a sodden rag, he wipes his fever'd brow.
Fast failing is his strength he finds ; his heart hath strangled
beat,
And on that lonely, sun-scorch'd track 'tis Death he soon
must meet.

Yet bravely still he struggles on—he will not own despair,
But oh, the heat is terrible, and hard his thirst to bear !
On, on, still on—rise after rise—till ah ! a bush at last ;
His trembling limbs are to it dragged—his form beneath it
cast :

Too late, too late, that shade is found, for o'er his troubled
eyes

A misty curtain seems to fall, and vision from them flies.
He swoons upon the burning ground—no human aid is
nigh—

He had but found that kindly bush beneath its boughs to
die.



THE BUSH MISSIONARY.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

(Air—"Bonnie Dundee.")

Our friend, Mr. Rolly, who comes up to push
His cure—evangelical—far in the bush,
Arrives, if he can, in the shearing time when
The station is crowded with godless young men—
Who feasted on fearful and wonderful tarts,
Rich pudding, and mutton, have Nick in their hearts,
But cash in their pockets, to further the cause
That sends Mr. Rolly to cripple his claws !

Our Rolly of raven has eye and the voice—
The last at vast distance I *suffer* by choice—
At praying he's great and at preaching he's grand,
Ah ! he is in touch with the bush-roaming band,
For has he not met with at stations galore
Old Dick, when he cooked, and with Ringer, who shore ?
He prays with, he chaffs them, drinks tea by the pail,
And then at lie swapping he is such a whale.

His costume is queer, for his felt hat is frayed,
His coat has forgotten the year it was made,
Yet curls in its collar to tickle his neck ;
His shirt is without one—a buttonless wreck—
Then as for his trousers, or pants, which ye will,
They reach to his "spring sides," and try hard to fill
The backs of those bulgers—protruding behind—
Their finger straps floating like flags in the wind.

His gloves and his socks—well, he leaves them at home
When starting, like Moses, the desert to roam ;
Yet still he is cleanly, and washes sometimes,
Though mixed grease and dust his apparel begrimes.
He's plucky enough. He in Providence trusts,
And makes a square meal off cold water and crusts
When nothing else offers, yet still, by-the-bye,
A good knife and fork at a banquet would ply.

Of medium stature, with shock head of hair,
His black beard would pad well "Gengulphian chair" ;
He might have been handsome while yet very young,
Is awfully pious, and has such a tongue !

He ogles the matrons, he ogles the girls,
And praises their bright eyes, complexions, and curls ;
And ah ! if his blessings would only bear fruit,
What futures would spring from each family root.

His horse, well acquainted with hard times and dust,
Can get up a road-ramming jog when it must,
And oft would go faster when Roll and he wrangle
If tilt-pole and axle the whip would not tangle.
His dam was " Neglected," his pa was " Unknown,"
From each of his parents he's taken the tone ;
The head and the legs of a carthorse has he,
The body of mantis of lofty degree.

He comes and he goes with the preacher, but still
It is not, I own, with an equine good will ;
For hunger and thirst on the vilest bush tracks
Are mixed in his mind with the hardest of thwacks ;
Yet, tho' such a rum one, he seems to hang out
Through seasons of plenty and seasons of drought
When many a better-bred, showier horse
Would leave on the road its malodorous corse.

And now for the buggy—which never is wet,
Unless from the *clouds* it a sprinkle may get ;
It rattles and shakes at the old horse's heels
As if the top part was at war with the wheels ;
'Tis all right, however, and under the seat
The Reverend Rolly each night will retreat
To snore like a doormouse, whatever the weather--
The tilt is of watertight counterfeit leather. .

And now for the service in woolstore at night—
The bullock bell rung, there is plenty of light,
For slush-lamps are blazing in jam tins, on plates,
While wool bales come handy for pulpit and seats,
But as for the hearers, alas ! there are few
Who care to abandon their poker or loo.
The “devil’s own books” have a charm for their mind
Which beats Rolly’s singing and sermon combined.

A prayer being offered, a hymn is begun—
Some singing in earnest, some singing in fun ;
But, what is surprising, the men most profane
Are those who excel in the soul-raising strain.
Yes, they in their boyhood, who seem so rough now,
In church or in chapel each Sabbath would bow
Their heads in devotion, the verses would sing,
Which now from wild bushland toward the stars ring.

But who would expect from our Rolly to hear
A sermon in words so well chosen and clear
That few of the preachers in surplice or gown
Could better, if equal it, even in town.
And then from his queer eyes such strange fervour gleams,
The Rolly you know seems a man of your dreams,
His turnout absurd and his dress you forget,
And that he’s a true man you’re open to bet.

The service is over, and back to their poker
The shearers depart, while our Rolly—the joker,
The odd fish, so *outré*, so scaly to view—
Is once more the greatest enigma to you.

And not only you, but to all in the land,
For his little game one can *not* understand ;
Yes, he may be saint, or the Father of Lies,
For all you can judge from his raven-grey eyes.

Well, if you'd be married or christen'd with ease,
Just make up your minds, and at once, if you please ;
Yes, now is the time you such business can fix,
For Rolly is licensed to do both the tricks,
And till his next visit, when twelve months are run,
Can neither the tying nor sprinkling be done.
So hunt in your pockets, pay Rolly his fee.
You won't? Well, you heathens, just e'en let it be.

Now, e'er we quite finish with Rolly, I'd state,
A Papist he'd been at an earlier date ;
Yet whether he ratted, or was he kicked out,
I grant is a matter much open to doubt.
But, sinking the question, a tale he told me
Which may or may not be what Scots call a "lee ;"
And though mix'd with truth there should lurk a good few,
I reckon, my readers, I'll tell it to you !

THE BUSH MISSIONARY'S STORY: HOW TONY BLAKE BECAME A PAPIST.

Near Limerick town, by the broad Shannon's tide,
A Protestant gentleman used to reside

In a very fine mansion, with garden to match,
And shrub-bordered fish pond in which you might
catch
The choicest of carp, if you'd only a slice
Of extra good fortune, or skill to entice
Those tasteless dry ancients by dodges Waltonian,
Or took them in fishstews, a method Monks'-ownian ;
But there, we will leave those big carp in possession
Of Mr. Blake's fish pond, and end this digression.

Our Protestant worthy possessed a kind heart,
And, guided by "Golden Rule," played well his part :
For never a peasant in parishes round
Who went to bed supperless then could be found ;
He'd sweet pretty daughters, and also a son
Of whose doubtful doings you'll hear e'er we're done ;
While as for the charming old lady, his wife,
She had been and still was the joy of his life.
But ah ! the time came, as it will to us all,
When Death to the kindly pere Blake made his call,
And so, much bedewed by his family's tears,
He drew his last breath full of honours and years.

Boom ! Boom ! tolls the bell,
'Tis a sorrowful knell
That seems from the old ivyed steeple to tell
The peasants who hear it : " A friend you have lost—
One hard to replace, as you'll find to your cost ;
For, though a Black Proddy, his heart and his hand
Were aye the most open ones found in the land ;

And now he is dead, why, your little gossoons
May git little porridge to ate wid their spoons ;
While little girleens and their mothers may find
Few garments they'll get now to kape out the wind ;
Then, as for yourselves, you will miss the kind greetin'
Himself would be givin' 'ach hoy he'd be meetin'."

The sombre hearse with lifeless load
Rolls slowly down the dreary road,
While those who scarce can realise
That he has gone, with tears and sighs
Lament the ever faithful friend
Whose dust with dust so soon shall blend ;
Recall his deeds, his sterling worth,
And tell of void he'll leave on earth—
A void, like writing on the shore,
Shall soon be noticed nevermore,
Especially if Tony Blake
His father's friends will welcome make
To share his provender and wine,
In fact invite them oft to dine.

What need to paint the last sad scene,
That open tomb midst hillocks green,
Those solemn words of faith and hope,
And harshly grating lowered rope?
But ah ! the mourners standing round
All shudder at the hollow sound
On coffin lid of scattered soil,
Fit symbol of the churchyard's spoil.

“Ashes to ashes ;” be it so ;
From gates of birth to death we go
For Adam’s sin this debt we pay
As one by one we pass away.
But gloom flies at the wicket gate,
Our friend—not us—has met his fate.

“Ould Misther Blake was an illigant man,
And wantin’ will be all the praties and male
Himself did be sindin’ ; and sorra a wan
Will shtip in his brogans ; we’ll miss him a dale.
But whisbt, now, yez Riverence, phwat do ye think,
Himself will be takin’ up there for his dhrink ?

That question to Padre put Paddy Maloney,
Who of the departed had been the tried crony—
A humble one, truly, but to him devoted,
For kindness received since, as gossoon short-coated,
He’d often received from his patron a pat
On tuft of red hair that grew up through his hat.

The pious old father uplifted his eyes,
As if he was looking for Blake in the skies,
Then, with a dry cough and a scratch at his ear,
Said, “Though our kind friend was a good man whilst
here—

That is, to a loose and profane way of thinking,
In the place where *he’s now* there’s no eating or
drinking,
Yet, though he may miss his old sherry and tripe
He’ll never need matches when lighting his pipe.”

Behind a big tree by the lane where then stood
The Padre and Paddy, and not looking good,
Is planted young Tony, who hisses out "Beast !
I'll make the old scoundrel eat dirt, though a priest.
I'll teach him to talk of poor father like that,
The dirty foul skunk, the mean clerical rat,
I'll—well, I'll consider the best thing to do ;
That black-hearted papist shall dine upon *rue*."

Below, in big kitchen of Anthony Blake,
Is soup (vermicelli), a carp from the lake,
A plump brace of pheasants, a woodcock on 'toast,
A saddle of mutton by way of a roast,
Queer curry and rice, for the rice has been boiled
In crude English fashion, and therefore is spoiled,
For, 'stead of the grains being firm, full, and free,
They're flaccid and moist to a nauseous degree.
But done to a turn are the mealy potatoes,
And also the seakale which on the estate grows
(A bad rhyme the last) now the menu to take on,
There's Brussels sprouts boiled with a small scrap of
bacon,
'And, added to this rather long list of cheer, a
Dish of the esculent root called "scoresnera." ,
There's cold apple pie, there are custards and tarts,
And trifles stuck over with almonds, like darts ;
There's mouldy old Stilton well mottled with port,
And celery, quite of the snowiest sort ;
There's walnuts, with crackers, lest guest's jaws be
hurt,
And almonds and raisins to crown the dessert.

Yet stay, there are pears and ripe medlars, these
Not all Tony's friends are expected to please,
But Barney will sample his best bins of wine,
For is not the Praste wid the masther to dine ?

Ignatius Flynn is of manners austere,
But still he well loveth good Protestant cheer ;
And his old yellow chaise and lean-headed nag,
With keenly cock'd ears and full eyes of a stag,
Are bringing the Father, who sniffs at the roast,
To hobnob and feast with his heretic host.

The footman, Tim Dooley, the sittingroom door
Throws open, announcing the priest to the fore,
And Anthony cries, with a flash of his eyes,
" Good Father, step in, there's a chair to your size."
Then, turning the key of the door as it closes,
To rather astonished old cleric discloses
His rooted conviction that he is a liar,
Who now without shrift will go " lower " or " higher "
Unless he can prove that the late Mr. Blake
Was really and truly plunged into that lake
Where brimstone excessive (at least 'tis reported)
Is always on hand but is never exported.
" Now look at these pistols—I heard what you sed—
I don't miss my mark, and I aim at your head ;
So prove your words true, or you'll quickly perspire,
And light your own pipe in the flames of your sire."

Just fancy a prodigal led to believe
His father's vast wealth he is bound to receive,

And who, after raising post obits a few,
Has spent every penny he got from the Jew—
Just fancy his feeling when, spite of much pilling,
 The poor pater dies
 And departs for the skies,
But, ere that, had cut his son off with a shilling.

Or take, for example, a monarch, when he
Is morally certain as monarch can be
That scattered by bombshell he'll every way fly,
Yet finds, when he's ready and anxious to die,
 That Nihilist fellow,
 Through getting too mellow,
Has nabbed been, head shortened, and burned like a
guy.

But never was monarch, or prodigal son,
Or mutineer blown from the muzzle of gun,
 So utterly disconcerted .
As Flynn, when his erstwhile convivial chum,
With scowl of a bandit, bull-headed and glum,
 His truculent words outblurted.

'Tis past—that fear, that sharp surprise ;
Though pistol clutched, relentless eyes,
And door fast locked by iron will
Sustains the sense of peril still.
The man is holy priest again
Disdaining earthly fears as vain,
And who, with calm, unflinching gaze,
And low clear voice, unfaltering says,

“ I own my words you heard aright ;
My hands are tied, I cannot fight.
So if you will that I should prove
The state of father whom you love,
Let me my breviary, bring,
And stole ; now for my chaise please ring,
But do not blame me for the pain
You soon must suffer—’twill be vain.”

“ Ring for your chaise,” young Blake replies,
With murder gleaming from his eyes ;
“ That door for you shall never move
Till you your vile assertion prove,
Or, should you fail, to let you pass
To poison worms and graveyard grass.
False priest ! false friend ! no vain pretence
From just revenge shall take you hence.
Come, prove your words, or quickly hie
To him who reigns, like you, to lie.”

“ Send for my book ; but once again
I warn you yours will be the pain ;
Not mine the fault, I only know
What’s happening in flames below,
And that yourself will surely burn
Unless you to the true faith turn.
Still obstinate ? Well, be it so,
For book and stole let Egan go.”

The groom, despatched, has now returned ;
The stole assumed, the leaves are turned

Of breviary ; in that book
The words you'll find, if you will look,
The Padre reads in tone of voice
As if the task was his by choice ;
But, surely, tis a strong earthshock
That causes now the room to rock ;
And Tony glances to the ceiling
To note the plaster of it peeling,
Yet not a crack can there be seen,
While placid is the Padre's mien.

But ah ! those narrow-piercing moans,
That clank of chains, those dismal groans,
And rumbling thunderpeals which sound .
As if they issued from the ground,
A dread diablerie presage,
Which all Blake's faculties engage.
No claptrap imitations these,
In cooler place his blood would freeze ;
That Padre's business is no sell,
The old man comes in haste from Hell,
With crowds of flaming fiends *en suite*,
And worse than Aden's grows the heat.

Poor Tony vastly wishes now
He'd ponder'd e'er he'd sought that row,
Or if he quarrell'd he at least
Had fought shy of a potent priest ;
And so he starts with downcast eye
On hardest crusts of humble pie,

Yes, he so lately cock-a-hoop
Is surely troubled with the croup ;
For hark, to speak he scarcely can
To vindicated holy man.
“ I’m satisfied, good father, stay
Your mandate of attendance, pray,
For as poor dad is *down below*
’Twere best to leave him there you know.”
As you might hail a ship at sea,
It passing swiftly on your lee,
Your words borne on the raging blast,
May reach the ears for which they’re cast,
But to you no response can win
Its way against the deaf’ning din,
So nought but doubt remains behind
To exercise and vex the mind ;
Thus Tony speaks to Padre grim,
But gets no answering word from him,
Save only in perplexing Latin—
A language he appears quite pat in.

Now strongest of sulphur fumes rise from the floor
And fly up the chimney—they can’t by the door,
While Tony who closed it would cheerfully be
Afflicted by mal-de-mer far out at sea,
Or brave fiercest tempest a tar has been in
For nearing him fast is a horrible din,
As if, say, ten thousand fierce convicts in chains
Had pounced on their wardens to beat out their brains ;
Yes, curses and cries,
Entreaties and sighs,

Would flood with salt water an image's eyes,
Assail the tympanum of Tony, poor fellow,
Who if not so tongue-tied would lustily bellow,
As you my dear readers would probably do
If seized with a funk so remarkably blue,
Unless by a fit apoplectical taken
Your soul from your body was suddenly shaken ;
 Yet Padre Flynn
 Not caring a pin,
Proceeds with his Latin as though he would win.
A wager is laid that he'd read without stopping
Though Nimble and Co. to the room should be popping
That uproar astounding it suddenly ceases
While steadily still the caloric increases,
And Tony knows well there's a room full of jokers
Who playfully touch him he thinks with hot pokers,
 Or hornpoints perhaps,
 Or sharp tails, for those chaps
Have doubtless of those things far more than mere
 scraps,
Though as he can feel the whole business—not view
 it—
He cannot *quite* see how the dickens they do it.

Now gasping from mingled strong sulphur and fright,
Young Tony perceives a deplorable sight,
For there close beside him a gloomy shade grows
He knows is his parent by cut of its clothes,
Besides which its boots with big bulges like onions
Recall to his mind the old gentleman's bunions,

Then despite its horns and a rather hot stare
The demon retains a benevolent air.

Yes, Anthony Blake

Has returned from the Lake,
And is not a bogus Papistical fake,
While, though of course mute, it with eyes plies the
priest

And Tony, who'd call'd the good father a beast,
As if it is saying, "What, do you not know me?
I think the cold shoulder you certainly show me,
You lov'd me in life, or pretended to do so ;
And were you both devils I would not treat you so ;
By torments tremendous I'm fairly unhinged ;
Do come and embrace me—you'll not be *much* singed.

In vain is appeal of Tartarean thing
Which thus to its mundane affections can cling,
Poor Tony's afraid to shake hands, while His Reverence
Regards his old chum as a fiend past deliverance ;

Alas and alack

That it ever came back

From warmth in abundance to chilly experience,
At least for itself as for Tony, ah, well,
He thinks in Avernus he's taking a spell.

'Tis a terrible fix for without any doubt
A devil once in is right hard to get out ;
And even the mildest satanical shade,
Like vulgar and shabby old father in trade,
A nasty sharp thorn is, and Tony begins
To feel as if sitting on needles and pins

So whispers the Padre (who shuts up his book)—
“Do send him back, Father, by hook or by crook,
I own you were right, and that good deeds, while here,
Are apprais’d in Heaven as very small beer.”

“Me? send it away again after the trouble
I’ve taken to get it here? No, not for double
The regular charge I’m entitled to make
For dragging a fiend from the Nethermost Lake.
Now, as I subscribe to the hunt ball and hounds,
I think I must trouble you, Sir, for ten pounds —
I’m greatly obliged, and you now have your will,
He is what he is, and a Protestant still,
While you, my dear fellow, no mercy may hope
Except through confession, the Saints, and the Pope.”

The clergyman goes, but the what you may call it
Would puzzle the biggest of footman to haul it.
While never Archbishop of Protestant faith
Could send back or rescue Old Gentleman’s wraith,
So always at night
When they’ve blown out each light
It kicks up, says Barney, the Devil’s delight.
Its clatter infernal
Would frighten a Colonel,
And almost reverse the earth’s motion diurnal.
Yes, Terror from Tophet, far worse than mere ghost,
Has come to make Tony its permanent host
And he who was lately defiant is now
As meek as decrepit old donkey or cow.

He cannot get married ; then, if he keeps single,
He knows very well he'll be short of a shingle,
While Barney declares that the sorra a wan,
Will shtop in the house, aither colleen or man,
Onless—and he gives you a comical wink—
We slape altogether wid lashins ov dhrink ;
Ah ! thin 'tis mesilf that is bothered, an' sure
The masther must go to Himself for a cure.

That smart groom, Mick Egan, is leading a dapple
Grey plump little cob to and fro by the chapel,
While Tony, the boaster, is down on his knees
At feet of the Padre, too frightened to sneeze ;
But what he is saying, or praying, or paying
To get the good Father to shunt the thing straying
Too far from hot quarters, I'll leave you to guess—
I haven't a notion, I'll frankly confess.
But past all belief is the look of relief
Which lights up the face of that worse than a thief,
When, being absolved by Ignatius Flynn,
He cares for the Devil no longer a pin ;
For now, being quit of sin's burthen enormous,
He'll eat like a drayhorse and sleep like a dormouse,
And make no mistake, this new pervert to Rome
In arms of the Church is already at home.

MORAL.

A moral, dear readers, you'll surely expect,
And so from my story I this one select

Thus : Don't with revolver assault a Divine
 When he on your invite has dropped in to dine ;
 For though 'tis unlikely he'd summons the Devil,
 He surely would *you*, for your conduct uncivil.



TULIP.

THE TRUE STORY OF A BLACK LUBRA.

Farewell to Tulip, who in Austral wild
 Did all she could to fill with grace a wurley.
 "Come, come," you say, "just please to draw it mild ;"
 But I maintain her hair was soft and curly,
 Her eyes black diamonds, her nose not snubby,
 While, as she wash'd, you'd rarely see her grubby.

Two rows of ivory, that flash'd like pearls,
 Adorned her mouth, which might have been extensive ;
 Yet, taken with the diamonds and curls—
 All native grown and therefore inexpensive :
 A face completed—when the maid was merry—
 Which *fetch'd*, they said, each bushland Tom and Jerry.

Besides, she mov'd as if on shapely head
 She'd balanced pitchers to the distant fountain,
 And swiftly chased, with modern Dian's tread,
 The banded wallabies upon the mountain.
 Sweet nymph was Tulip, though *not* quite the lily,
 In trailing skirts, you meet in Piccadilly.

Most certainly before sun-freckl'd dames
Of age mature, in horrible sun-bonnets,
Gay sylvan bards acknowledged Tulip's claims
For preference as subject of their sonnets ;
Which, when completed, *shunn'd* their pious mothers,
Yet circled freely 'mongst their bushland brothers.

And now, methinks, I've made it vastly clear
That, while her years danc'd through her teens to twenty,
Our dusky heroine was quite a dear
Who had, be sure, of would-be lovers plenty ;
But old Tanbelta, as her parents told him,
Just took her home to cuddle or to scold him,

And fight with Jenny—oft prefixed by Wonna—
Who'd borne his burthens and had baked his lizards ;
And who, resenting rival thrust upon her,
Involved the wurley in domestic blizzards.
Yet not one-sided was the warfare bitter,
For Tulip slang'd the gentle Jane and hit her.

But though, like camels, dusky ribs are treated
By consorts—indolent in ought save hunting—
The wurlies oftentimes become o'er heated,
When gins, like white wives, hoist rebellion's bunting ;
And then a Tura,¹ e'en the most heroic,
Just knuckles down and takes it like a stoic.

But how those termagants sustain'd the thwacks
Their heads received from deftly-wielded waddies—
That left in craniums deep gaping cracks

1. Tura—Blackfellow.

Which gore distill'd to trickle down their bodies—
 I'll leave to reader's shock'd imagination :
 Their lord looked on in silent approbation ;

And would the corpse have quietly interred
 Had heavy yam stick bitten home too deeply.
 Whilst safely also, it may be inferred,
 That cute old Tan had gotten soon and cheaply
 Rib number three to pound his tasteless nardoo,¹
 Make matters warm, and help to eat his bardoo.

But each good wife had crown like clout-head nail—
 That tougher grows the harder it is hammer'd—
 And, so when *myall* was of scant avail,
 Our brace of beauties at each other clamour'd,
 As fishfags would if situated like 'em ;
 But then their blokes might interfere and strike 'em.

It grieved me sore to know those matrons fought,
 Especially about so mean a master,
 Who look'd on scrimmage as a kind of sport
 While I provided *Bate's Salve* and plaster :
 For peace poor Tulip might not know what hope meant
 Had Tura Jemmy not proposed elopement.

That is, I, thinking old Tanbelta greedy,
 With lady fair told Jemmy to levant ;
 When he, with promptitude, though rather seedy,
 The blooming Tulip managed to transplant
 In neatest style. Yet still I've heard that awful
 Were adjectives by cultivator lawful.

1. Nardoo—A swamp seed which Burke and Wills starved on.

But as old Tan had not the least idea
Of legal agency in crim. con. cases,
Like savage hound he hunted for his dear
And her abductor in all sorts of places ;
And, by good luck and, on their part, much dodging,
He found them not in any sylvan lodging.

Then, by-and-by, his wrath began to cool,
As did the ardour of the other rascal.
Tanbelta found he'd been a hoary fool—
The gay Lothario, that he'd to task all
A sated hubbie's tactics to be pleasant
To pouting spouse—when no one else was present.

So to Society the pair returned
And went to visit at Tanbelta's wurley—
To leave their cards our friends had not then learned,
And little cared if they call'd late or early ;
But still, I fancy, that in presence, greasy,
Of sable friend—the bridegroom—felt uneasy.

The bride's late husband wore a sullen air
Which might mean treachery, so Jemmy eyed him
With wary optics, while the charming pair
Of Eve's dark daughters prattled on beside him ;
For both—well satisfied with late transaction—
Were full of peace as kill'd out Irish faction.

Though lacking tea, they whiled the time away
In gossip light, just like their fairer sisters,
Who vastly relish chats on topics gay,

But more especially on social blisters,
Which, though they sting their dearest friends most keenly,
With meaning smiles they revel in serenely.

But as I did not happen to be there,
And phonographs were yet to be invented,
I cannot favour you with scandal rare
Those ladies whisper'd and with eyes accented ;
So please suppose the pretty dears, like others,
Discoursed, at length, on other black gins brothers.

Or fairer beaux—for be it known that both
Were vastly partial to a white-skin'd lover,
And prized his presents—being nothing loth
To take a blue shirt as a fancy cover ;
While more especially was either willing
To close her fingers on a proffer'd shilling.

'Twas quite millenium, altho' the old one
Would sometimes try his Tulip to regain ;
When, 'stead of braining Jemmy, like a bold one,
He'd track the spoiler on secluded plain ;
And had he caught him in a state unguarded,
Black James' caul would soon his hide have larded.

But, weasel like, our Tura kept one eye
On constant guard, while he with 'tother slumber'd ;
And though undoubtedly his foe was spry,
Jem's mangled corpse no solitude has cumber'd.
Indeed, the vagabond—now fat and fifty—
Is, like one "*Larry*"—happy though unthrift.

A sluggish tide had Tulip's sea of life,
With Jemmy's jealousy to stir its ripples
And make things *pleasant* to his faithful wife.

Your green-eyed man is like the one who tipples :
His *bete noir* bolts if once 'tis fairly going,
And when 'twill stop there's certainly no knowing.

A little incident I'll now relate
That illustrates how mischief sometimes sways us
From path respectable to deviate ;
Then, Judas-like, all shamefully betrays us ;
And this queer business, prompted sure by devil,
O'erspread the land like fabled Satyr's revel.

For was not Tulip by her pro. tem. lord
Most kindly sent to old Tanbelta's wurley,
While Tan, to show his mind was richly stor'd
With notions liberal as well as surly,
Dispatch'd his Jenny to the couch vacated,
And, presto ! change ! the couples were cross mated.

But in such action there was nothing strange,
For all their friends and relatives were doing
The self-same thing along the Flinders Range ;
And which I told them they'd be likely rueing—
They only laugh'd, and seemed to think me foolish,
While I thought them a vast deal worse than mulish.

But times are changeable, and fancies too ;
And so it was that Jemmy and Tanbelta,
With other members of free-thinking crew—

Who'd spouses swapped, as others would a pelta¹—
From rampant sin to purity subsided
By being coupled as though ne'er divided.

That freak was singular in dual sense
Because 'twas strange, and not again repeated,
While parties to it came without pretence
To be by me medicinally treated ;
Indeed, they paid—and over many dearly—
For having acted (we will put it) queerly.

And after that I neither saw nor heard
Of Jemmy's lubra, till from *home* returning
I passed the place where she had been interr'd
In leafy tomb, which last, from lack of learning
In grieving relatives, bore no inscription
To father fibs and practice kind deception.

So then, said I, poor Tulip shall not fade
From face of earth and leave no trace behind her,
And though less skilful with a pen than spade
I'll do my best an epitaph to find her.
An epitaph ! Her story would be better—
So here I've told what incidents beset her.

1. Pelta—garment.



TO A DEAD BLACK GIN.

Alas, poor Wongaty ! But yesterday
With coaxing smile *a pipeful* you were asking,
When with your friends you at the woodheap lay
Like some huge lizard in the sunshine basking.
O, freak of fate ! In effort to provide
A future harvest for the Reaper's sickle
Upon yourself the trenchant blade was tried,
And truest tears down dusky cheeks now trickle.

A cheery daughter of the soil were you,
And sad to say at times a shocking sinner ;
That is to strict, enlightened, people's view—
But folks will sin who sadly need a dinner.
Besides, propriety you never learned
From pious parents or chaste friend's example ;
Your livelihood by queerest means was earned,
And you of Black Gins were an honest sample.

When plenty reigned exhibited would be
Two rows of pearls in dazzling white condition,
Which open'd wide that feasting friends might see
The way by which you gave good things admission.
And then your sigh ! when all had entered in
To spacious storeroom's flexible concealment ;
For shafts of fate you'd care no single pin,
But knew the peace an anaconda's meal meant.

When drought prevailed and you could rarely find
A scanty meal in dust o'er-laden blizzard,
E'en patient Job had envied you your mind
While slowly grill'd attenuated lizard.
And so with sunshine and with shadow cast
Across your path by mingled joy and sorrow,
Uncertainty had so usurp'd your past
That little reek'd you what might bring the morrow.

Whate'er your thoughts were of a future state
You realised that you were surely dying ;
Yet all resignedly you met your fate
While grieving friends around your couch were crying.
You said " Good-bye " as pious Christian might,
Then closed your eyes in slumber never ending.
Your soul released has wing'd its viewless flight
And left its clay for elemental blending.

Should some believe—self-righteous prigs—that you
Are surely doom'd to torments everlasting,
Let sinless members of the bigot crew
Stand boldly forth and start the missile casting.
Far greater culprits, when by death dismay'd,
With prayers and tears profess a late repentance ;
Then fondly deem their peace with Heaven they've made
And so escaped an outraged God's just sentence.

Where wings thy soul, poor dusky heathen, where ?
And will its case be judged *on all* its merits ?
Untutor'd here, must it be *punish'd* there
Like well taught Christendom's rebellious spirits ?

Your peccadilloes you *did not* repent
Unknown to you were conscience's dread terrors ;
But HE, all merciful, must fain relent
And pardon grant to what were Nature's errors !
April 30, 1897.



TO A BLACK SNAKE.

To Eden's groves a scaly reptile came
On Satan's mission—guileful and delusive,
Who then prevailed on late-created dame
To pluck an apple—knowledge too diffusive ;
But had your prototype possessed your head,
Malignant eyes, and hiss so terrifying,
Our ancestress, like simple maid, had fled,
And found no cause for figleaf-apron tying.

By simple maid I mean a damsel who
Has little gleaned from modern trees of knowledge—
So passion stirring—by their sisters *blue*,
Who books indite and *finish* girls at college ;
For modest nymphs long dieted on such
Suggestive pabulum e'en you would grapple
“ By hook or crook,” not caring overmuch
Whatever happened—so they got the apple.

But I'm digressing, and will haste to say,
 Of evil things, to some you seem most evil,
 For though you wobble openly by day,
 The spirit yours of fierce vindictive devil ;
 But, handy pandy, 'tis a question quite
 If *ladies'* book or you, by bushman's hovel,
 Could injure most by promptings or by bite,
 Yet odds I'll lay, and back the yellow novel.



THAT BLACKFELLOW.

That spare-limb'd, heavy-eyebrow'd black,
 With unkempt locks such tangled fuzz in,
 Of human cards is just the Jack,
 And Prince of Wales's country cousin—
 A million times removed or so—
 To tailor not so much indebted.
 And yet amongst his tribe you know
 As toadied to, perhaps, and petted.

Like Royalties, supreme at courts,
 His origin from Eve he traces ;
 And though swell *suits* he seldom sports,
 He commonly is seen with braces.
 Besides, he puffs the soothing weed
 And casts his eye on wife of neighbour ;
 No prince exceeds him at a feed
 Or fancies less excessive labour.

When summer roasts the sandhill pines,
And Boreas is far too breezy,
As nature's lord that nigger shines—
Especially when extra greasy.
He's scented too, but then his taste
Is sadly out in fragrant matters;
And *far off* he should *always* waste
The frangipani that he scatters.

And now, as *copper coloured* black
Improv'd will soon be from creation,
Of photos please pile up a stack
To keep in mind your queer relation.
Of course, descendants he will have
With British skins and Roman noses,
Who'll favour Teuton, Celt, or Slav,
While some may pass as seed of Moses.

In half a century I've seen
The blacks improving much in places,
Not only in their dress and mien
But other Austral airs and graces.
For though they're *yet above* the "Push"—
Vile larrikins of language ruddy—
Their conversation in the bush
Is crowded with "By C—t" and "Bloody."

Now e'er this notice I conclude
Of "George," or rather "Wommerrinna,"
I'll own that though his ways are rude
He's not at all an *outside* sinner.

No, treat him fairly and you'll find
He's quite as honest, and e'en more so,
Than half the folks of fairer rind,
More beefy calves and bigger torso.

February 23rd, 1899.



THE THUNDERSTORM.

A TRUE STORY.

Air—"Bonnie Dundee."

On dusty old stretcher I wide awake lie,
For storm that is raging is no lullaby,
Yet awfully jolly, for does there not fall
The heaviest deluge my mind can recall ;
I therefore just fancy all waterholes full,
No end of fat lambs, and a big crop of wool ;
As also—contingent of course on the spoil—
A trip down to town as a break in my toil.

The roof's a delusion, for water galore
Rains down on my bed and bespatters the floor.
But little I'm caring though all may be wet,
For pluvial presents so seldom we get ;
That lightning incessant and thunder loud crashing
The hut into fragments will surely be smashing.
But ah ! through the window the niggers I see
All running like winking to shelter with me.

One moment, swart demons, they show to my sight,
 The next they are lost in Cimmerian night ;
 But that does not stop them, for soon on the flags
 They crowd—a queer concourse, in picturesque rags.
 “ Hulloo !” I exclaim. “ *Why* you come ‘long o’ me?
 Him all about cowie¹ ‘long *inside*, you see.
 But sit down ‘long floor and *to-morrow all right* !”—
 Poor devils ! they are in a draggle-tailed plight.

They’ve dogs by the dozen, pups under each arm—
 But essence of dog is a scent without charm ;
 At least to my fancy, and so I say, “ Here,
 You put ‘em out wilkah,² or else I must clear
 The lot of you quickly ; now, *out* they all go”—
 A leg from my blanket just thrusting to show
 The canine contingent must suffer the rain,
 Or dogs and their masters troop out on the plain.

The niggers all beg me to let the curs be :
 “ Him poor peller puppie ; him quiet, you see.”
 But blacks are my limit, so *canes exeunt*
 Or soon from the hut will their frankincense me hunt.
 But not without dodging and snarls, on their part,
 Do mangy, gaunt mongrels from comfort depart ;
 And *almost* might pipers be playing out there,
 So horrid the discord of doggish despair.

Their pet curs ejected, my lodgers proceed
 A big, blazing log fire to build up with speed ;
 First one in the chimney, then out on the floor
 They start for their comfort some half-dozen more.

1. Cowie—water. 2. Wilkah—dogs.

But, ah, when the smoke and the steam from them rise,
 Assailing my scent-finding organ and eyes,
 As chairman (in bed) I just rule out the motion
 As *just* a bit close to Tartarean notion.

My sneezing is over ; the red brands—brought back—
 Are piled in the chimney—a high-flaming stack ;
 While round, in dense circle, my visitors stand ;
 A handsome, a smiling, and virtuous band.
 But now they all tell me, in whisperings low,
 A secret I ought as their dear friend to know :
 And that is, in English, “ The son of a gun—
 Old Jemmy—is raising this racket for fun ! ”

The fierce wirra-wirra,¹ with glare near incessant,
 That flashes through window—too close to be pleasant—
 And volleying arndoo’s² dread rattle and roar
 Are pleasantries all to be laid at his door.
 They say, too, when Tintoo³ the cowie shall dry
 He’ll raise a big poota⁴ to wipe out the sky ;
 And if *bona fide* the threats they let fall
 ’Tis certain the culprit will soon lose his caul.

I say, “ You be hanged ! *That* old wocalla⁵ ? *What* for
 You *monkey* ’long me ? *What* you tell ’em me *that* for ?
 Him *no* can’t make arndoo or cowie—him gammon.
 His gin’s tumbled down, and ’tis so with his lemon ;
 Him *plenty* all right when him young lubra ketch ’em,
 So one of you go ’longa sandhill and fetch ’em—
 You, Pooteperunta ! ” But he, or the rest,
 Would rather face Nick ; so I give the thing best.

1. Wirra wirra—lightning. 2. Arndoo—thunder. 3. Tintoo—the sun.

4. Poota—duststorm. 5. Wocalla—crow.

Now, when they are warmer they soon want to sleep,
So out on the flagstones 'neath wet rags they creep
In family circles—a dozen or more—
And, crowded quite closely, just fill up the floor.
While O ! from the perfume pervading the air
I well might imagine myself in the lair
Of polecat or weasel, or, still better, skunk !
'Tis *too* rough outside tho' ; I'll stick to my bunk.

But, saving a wail from an infant—with wind—
Or some other ache to young infants unkind,
My guests all sleep soundly as dormice might do,
Till Tintoo the Western Plains rises to view ;
When leaving their scent, as a keepsake for me,
They get a grand tuck-out of damper and tea.
Then joining old Jemmy—with ne'er a grunt—
Start off in high glee for a kangaroo hunt !



THE SAILOR'S FIRST KANGAROO HUNT.

You want to chase a kangaroo
Aboard that clean-heel'd clipper ?
Well, shipmate, he may carry you
If you're a *quiet* skipper.
There's *Badger*, there ! You'd rather ride
The *chestnut* ? Well then, catch him !
You'll think a yardarm you're astride,
But jerking yard can't match him.

Hi ! Starn all toes from Ringtail's girth,
Or wrinkle he may shew you ;
A lovely buck ! Excuse my mirth,
He could not fairly throw you.
There ! Up you get ! You're right as rain,
Bar dust and blubber bruise, Jack,
And mind me, when aloft again,
Just hang on for the cruise, Jack !

My AB ! You are under weigh,
But don't go crowding sail so,
Unless you'd later in the day
Like knot a twelvemonth snail go.
Your weather helm ; now, *can't* you mind,
You've luff'd into my craft, Jack,
And next thing, two to one, you'll find
He'll rake you fore and aft, Jack !

A big red buck, and flying doe !
'Ware doe, and go for " boomer " !
Hi ! Crabholes there ! I told you so,
You've caught a rare old tumour.
There ! That's your sort ! Keep jib-sheets taut,
Don't roll like ship in seaway ;
The much mix'd sort is best of sport,
And you'll fetch up your leeway.

In *saddle* you had *better sit*,
Though Ring's *neck* legs don't stretch so.
The crupper's *too* far aft a bit,
But Hop-a-long, you'll ketch so.

Paul Pry has pinn'd him by the tail,
Old Kaiser by the windpipe,
And soon will need a coat of mail
In Coodla's far from kind gripe.

They've *got him down* ! He's *up* again
And clinching Kaiser tightly.
Just hear the big dog yell with pain
From long red gash, unsightly.
Hi ! *Look out* Jack ! He'll have you too !—
The *blooming fool* ! He's *got* him !
And bully 'tis for kangaroo
Unless I quickly pot him.

Was that Jack's head ? or dog's ? or whose
I crack'd, like nut, I wonder ?
They're so mix'd up 'twould Scratch confuse
To pick out top from under.
Ah ! Longtail's down, with fractured crown,
They're tearing out his throttle.
Here, Jack, my lad, if feeling bad,
Take soundings of this bottle.

There's nothing broke—a scratch or two—
Your rig-out though needs mending.
You've pepper'd that old kangaroo,
And made a dusty ending.
Now sling the tail to side-strap, Jack,
I'll see to dogs—poor wretches—
And then we'll head a homeward track
For bohea and whole breeches.

VERDANT GREEN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS FIRST BUCKJUMPER.

I sat upon the stockyard rails—
From home I'd recently come out,
And watched the horses with their tails
Switch one another, turn about.
Yes, head and tail the creatures stood,
The swarming flies to keep away,
As if they fully understood
The true co-operative lay.

Save *one*, the creatures all were lean,
Like country donkeys when the snow
Lies thickly on the village green,
With nothing eatable below ;
The fat one looked an equine king,
With little ears and shining skin ;
Within an exhibition ring
I felt convinced a prize he'd win.

Just then old "Doggy Joe" came down
To get his horse—a wretched beast,
Whose fluffy hair of rusty brown
Was long as shaggy goat's at least.
That creature had an earnest gaze
As if it sorrow long had known ;
I know not where it went to graze—
It seemed to be but hair and bone.

I rather liked its owner—Joe,
Who'd been a poacher, so they said,
But hunted now the squatters' foe,
The dingo, at a pound per head.
And so I asked—although of course
It mattered not one pin to me—
“Why do you ride your wretched horse
And leave that fine, fresh, fat one free?”

“Vy does I ride my wretched hoss
An' leave that fine, fresh, fat one free?
A shame it *is*; but look here, boss,
He's much too good a hoss for me.
My dirty pants an' old blue shirt
U'd look bad-like upon his back.
Young man, you try him for a spurt,
You'll find him jes a tip-top hack.

“With them there boots an' bran' new spurs
You jes would shine”—he gave a grin,
Which made me hate him—“I prefers
Old Dandy, there, altho' he's thin;
For where I camps, why, there he'll stay,
And fill hisself on sticks an' stones.
Up here that 'ere's the hoss to pay;
I rather likes to see their bones.”

“Well,” I remarked, “I'd like to see
Some flesh on such anatomy;
And as to ride I feel inclined
I'll take him, if you do not mind.”

The handsome horse of course I meant,
 And quickly for my saddle went ;
 And, oh ! how eager was my friend,
 As he rushed up a hand to lend.

" I'll bail him up for you," he said ;
 And quickly at the quadruped
 He threw a stone, when with a snort
 The beast came trotting to be caught.
 On which I was assured by Joe
 "'Tweren't much *he* didn't know."
 I asked, " Is he the owner's horse ?"
 His captor grinned, and said, " Of course."

" If that's the case he might object
 To have him ridden ?" " No ; not he.
 You take him, Boss, for I expect
 The gaffer pleased as Punch will be."
 With that, my nice new saddlecloth
 Joe used as currycomb and brush ;
 I certainly felt rather wroth,
 He did not seem to care a rush.

Joe knew no better, though he seemed
 To have low cunning of a sort.
 That horse's eyes they strangely gleamed,
 While now and then he'd give a snort.
 " Whoa, Ringtail ! whoa, boy !" cried the man,
 And quickly put the saddle on.
 " Jes jump up slippy, that's your plan ;
 My word ! I see you *are* a don."

I was ; but yet I somehow thought
 'Twas rather odd those station men
Should crowd around, as if some sport
 Was just upon the *tapis* then.
The cook, with fryingpan in hand,
 The stockman, and a black or two ;
I did not stop to count the band,
 But *why* they came I quickly knew.

I said that horse's ears were small,
 But to my sight they smaller grew ;
I could not see his head at all—
 Where it had gone I scarcely knew.
I heard him give one horrid yell,
 I felt his back beneath me jerk,
While Joe exclaimed, " This is a sell !
 By jingo, how he goes to work ! "

If work meant bounding from the earth
 Like bombshell from a mortar thrown,
Then work it was, but cause for mirth
 I could not see in it, I own.
And so, not caring to amuse,
 I threw a somersault, and sat
Upon a spot I did not chose,
 Which proved the summit of my *hat*.

'Twas lucky that my hat was there,
 And that my brains were in my *head* ;
I was not certain if they were,
 But that's what Master Joseph said.

As for that dreadful horse, he knew
I should not ride again that day,
So after me my saddle threw,
But took my other traps away.

Did I blaspheme that bad old man,
And kick him where *his* brains were not ?
No, Sir ; but now will, if I can,
A moral from my story trot.
Thus, should you to a station go,
Where all the steeds are poor save *one*,
And people whom you do not know—
Beware of fat, or you'll be done.



TO A BUSH CROW.

Thou, Satan's own, that prowls the Austral plains
To ghoulish feast on horrible remains
Of drought's dread harvest and the reptile brood—
Your ways are filthy as your mien is rude.
And if the souls of murderers are free
To choose fresh tenements, they dwell in thee :
All helpless things to ruthlessly invade
With cruel beak, and ply their felon trade.

A taunting fiend, the lost one you attend,
To mock his thirst and prophecy the end ;
All plainly hinting that, before he dies,
You'll gaily banquet on his anguish'd eyes.

Then luckless lambs you noisily attack
 To strew their entrails on the bushland track,
 And—worse than devil !—on their vitals feed,
 While bleating victims blindly stray and bleed.

Than even strain of blatant love-lorn goat
 I hate your vile, exasperating note,
 Which—self conceited—you yourself enjoy
 As does his discord, catgut-scraping boy.
 And much I wish all crows that so can sing
 Had *one* neck only—one that I could wring,
 And so perchance cause countless fiends to fly
 Where reigns *their father*, and the flames leap high.



HE TOOK THE WRONG NUMBER.

A TALE OF BLOOD AND DARKNESS.

The time had come for closing at the Jolly Bushman Inn—
 A decent country “public,” not a bushland den of sin—
 When Drummer, cold and hungry, from his buggy ent’ring
 said—

“I’ll take a scalding Walker, do a feed, and go to bed ;
 For no one’s here to yarn to, and I’ve done enough to-day.”
 Then muttered, “Master Lambdown seemeth anything but
 gay.”

Yet soon forgot the subject when the beef and pickles came,
 And he was warmed by whisky and the mallee’s dancing
 flame ;

Indeed, he little heeded when for bed he turned to go
The landlord's plain direction, "Please take number so-and-so."

Dick Samples climb'd the staircase and commenc'd a round
of calls

At what seem'd boot encumber'd, dark recesses in the walls,
Until it dawn'd upon him that his number he'd forgot,
Yet down again to ask it he resolved he would not trot ;
For though old Lambdown linger'd in his little private den,
No light was elsewhere burning in that silent building then.
Well, any shop would suit him, be it's number what it might,
A bed was what he wanted just to coil in for the night.

Ah ! here a handle turning to a room admitted him
Where reigned Egyptian darkness, so he sought to light a
glim,

And groped around for matches where he fancied some
should be,

But could not light on any—and of course he could not see.
"Confound the blooming landlord, and" (well, something
else) "the maid ;

Old Lambdown is a miser who deserves to lose his trade."

Thus, grumbling, down he sat on what he took to be a trunk,
But sprang up crying, "Scissors ! 'tis a blooming bushman
drunk.

Yes, boots and all are on him, so, altho' he does not snore,
He'll certainly be safer when he's fairly on the floor !"

Our Drummer was an athlete, used his fists well, and was
strong,

So choosing line of business did not take him very long ;

Thus grasping hard the blankets, as for dogged tug-of-war,
He gave that too full toper an extremely nasty jar ;
Receiving, though, a ditto quite sufficient e'en to floor
A free-and-easy bagman, for the bed was drenched in gore ;
So too was cheerful room-mate, who himself the deed had
 done
To aggravate the landlord, as a jim-jam bit of fun.

That picture flash'd on Richard as when nightmare fancy
 warps,
And made him shriek like syren and collapse upon the
 corpse,
While carpenters with coffin and old lady with a light—
Who'd entered in soft slippers at the moment known as
 right—

Concluded it was Satan, there before them for his prey,
So dropp'd the oblong casket in their zeal to shun delay.
And as loud bang resounded and the candle flame went out
They took the bun from Samples with a wild, unearthly
 shout ;
Then charging through the doorway and stampeding to the
 stairs

They swarm'd to lower regions like an avalanche of bears,
And Mrs. Smiff who led 'em got a broken limb, they say,
While *pressgang*, falling on her, started sudden crops of grey.

But while that heap was squirming, with an awful yell and
 roar,
The demon cleared it flying and departed by the door,
As if for further mischief till the crowing of the cock,
Yet Trooper Nabwell caught him in the town at ten o'clock.

And took him to a building where attendants strictly see
 He's safe in barr'd apartment that is numbered 93 ;
 Where oftentimes he's sleepless and declares the sheets are
 red,
 And so to keep them on him, why, they strap him down in
 bed.

SAGE REFLECTIONS.

I'm sorry for poor Samples, though I cannot blame the *stiff*,
 The undertaker's myrmidons or luckless Mrs. Sniff ;
 But oh ! I do old Lambdown for allowing corpse to be
 Where it might be mistaken for a bushman on the spree !

NOTE.—I will not be responsible for the entire truth of the above story though the colonial papers of the period were the sources from which I derived it.—R.B.



TO A RABBIT

CAUGHT IN THE TOP OF A NETTED FENCE.

O bunny, 'tis surprising how you've changed your simple
 ways
 Since first I watched your gambols in my happy boyhood's
 days
 And hunted you with "Scottie," who was also fond of *cats*
 Of barn-door brood (*clandestinely*), and *openly* of *rats*.
 For though you'd deftly burrow, like a sapper at a siege,
 Neath every rural obstacle and also "go and squeeze,"

As vulgar urchins had it, through a crack would cause to
sneeze

A sunbeam in consumption, why, you could not climb the
trees !

You *could* not, but you *can* now, to the mulga's topmost
limbs,

Where little bush canaries used to sing their matin hymns ;
Yes, *there* you go for supper, while the dingo howls below,
Till, weary grown with waiting, he for other fare must go ;
While slyly you are winking with your round and jocund eye
At pretty lop-eared sweetheart who is coyly perching nigh ;
Then after Sol has risen, or a little time before,
You do your little courting and escort her to her door.

You'll soon be evolved till you clinch prehensile tail,
And warble like a nightingale on myall branch or rail ;
Yes, paws will soon be changing for true-perching feet and
legs,
And boys will tumble out of trees while hunting for your
eggs.

Then iguanas calling in to each deserted burrow
Will miss your tender progeny, and turn away in sorrow ;
While carpet snakes will have to climb to clasp you with
their fangs,
And natives send up *billet-doux* in shape of boomerangs.

Improving you are also in the *populating* line,
For, oh ! 'tis truly wonderful when youthful pair combine
To start a little colony of evolving things,
How every *moment* in the day more little strangers brings ;

At least each *minute* surely must, for though no Bun you'll see,
We'll say, to-day, why, on the *next*, an overflowing sea
Of bobbing scuts, of fur and ears, will roll across the scene,
And leave behind it scarce a stick, much less a blade of green.

Then, Bunny, dear, just evolute with e'en indecent haste ;
Don't wait to work out fancy plan—a moment do not waste ;
Don't mind about prehensile tails, or secondary things,
But imp yourself, at double quick, with migratory wings ;
Too sultry *here* it is for you, your fur's not worth a rap,
Your *body*, save for niggers' dogs, unpayable to trap ;
Besides, you've worked these diggings out to starving point,
I fear ;
Then sprout those wings I spoke about, my blessing take,
and clear.

MARCH 14, 1899.

NOTE.—Since the rabbits came to this part of the country they have, owing to a total absence of ground feed obtaining during severe droughts, become very expert climbers, and really go for their suppers into the tops of fairly high bushes, where they literally peel the bark from the topmost twigs. The old doe referred to in the above verses no doubt imagined the new vermin fence was put there for her to practice on, and so lost no time in availing herself of the accommodation. The space, however, between top of netting and barbed wire above it proved to be rather too tight even for a rabbit, and so the old lady remained there to personally testify against the inadequate provision, according to a rabbit's point of view.—R.B.

THE SUICIDE'S SOLILOQUY.

[A woman in an American prison lately killed herself by swallowing *live spiders*, and died in horrible torture.—Vide March (1899) papers.]

'Tis horrible ! this worse than living death
 That torment breeds with ev'ry passing breath :
 For mocking fiends molest me while 'tis light
 And drive me mad in sleepless hours of night.
Why should I live ? when hope may never more
 Breathe cheering promises of joys in store,
 Yet leaves me memory, with scorching tongue,
 To trace the steps of soul to Satan flung.

Why should I live ? when living means but pain,
 And fiercest longings, which must be in vain !
 Yet even death—so easy for the *free*—
 By prying gaoler is debarr'd for *me* ;
 Knife, rope, and poison, *all* of them denied,
 With potent fumes and kindly river's tide.
 And oh ! to 'scape this solitary cell
 I'd dare the worm and quenchless fire of hell !

How can I die ? To those on dying *bent*
 By God or devil is solution sent ;
 That *lurking* spider ! *Yes*, with venom'd fangs
 He slays the fly while in his net it hangs ;
 Then *why* not me ? Besides there's more to aid
 The goblin insect in his deadly trade.
 I'll swallow them—yet *shudder* at the thought,
 For even *death* may be too dearly bought !"

* * * * *

Can this be dying? *Surely* it must be
 A foretaste here of hell's eternity !
 Or is it but excruciating toll
 A sinner pays for liberated soul ?
 O——h, God ! have mercy * * *



A FEW POSITIVE FACTS BY THE N.W. PITCHER.

A young man is down from the drought-stricken West
 Who loveth, of all things, *veracity* best ;
 His lingual member is long, but we know
 'Tis dwarf'd to mere nothing by pliant long-bow ;
 For though at odd times he may pose as an "Orson"
 He'd snuff out in no time old Baron Munchausen ;
 For urged and sustain'd by same truthful intention,
 On *much* grander scale is his bump of *invention*.
 I therefore *do* hope you will *bolt* without trouble
 The following *facts* by old Gulliver's double,
 Which I and the boys in my bachelor's den
 Will tempt him to feed to my truth-loving pen ;
 So hazard this question—to start the thing going—
 "Oh ! how is the crop of young myall-trees growing?"

"From *seed* that I planted *the year before last* ?
 Why, *twenty feet high* ! and they're still growing fast ;
 I mean the *culls* left, which the coves would not cut
 For telegraph poles and the new shearers' hut ;

And if no more *icebergs* should happen to fall
As biggest of gumtrees they'd soon be as tall ;
And you'd better bet, I'd much rather import
My ice from the North Pole than pick up the sort
Of marbles that smash'd the trees, stockyard, and fences,
And smother'd the station in *extra expenses*.

By Jingo ! that day when Tim Toughpants and me
Were out at Gibraltar, the new yard to see,
Up came a black cloud bank all choke full of thunder ;
And Thomas observed : " I say, Pard, let's get under
That myall on high stony rise, for, *you bet*,
We'll *bog* in the flat here, besides getting wet.
So, hot foot, we started, but *ruddy* big boulders
Came peppering down on our *red* heads and shoulders,
Which smash'd up the mulgas in two two's to chaff :
A fact, I assure you ! so *don't* start to laugh—
Oh, how about *us* ? Well, we *dodg'd* 'em, d'ye see,
Else telling this yarn I'd not likely to be,
For after they'd melted a lot, *this I'll swear*,
A *small* one would go a good cubic yard square !"

" The *last time* you told us, you said that *ice brickbats*
Kewobbled the *saltbush* and dealt out such quick pats !
But never you mind, it but shows you're *improving* !
Don't think for *one moment* I thought of reproving
A man so renown'd as yourself for strict piety,
Adhesion to truth, and *unbroken sobriety* !
But comments are *always* allowable, Jack—
And, now, for Black's battle—best lie in the pack !"
" I bows to you, Pard, who would frighten a dingo
Or *ruddy* jew-lizard with doggrely lingo.

I'll give you best *there*, but at *positive facts*
I'd have you *laid out* in the shortest of acts.
And don't *you young fellows* make *ruddy* mistake—
I'd run old De Rogeymong hard for the *cake* ;
While you'd better bet that 'twas *me* and no other
Who started the beast as a blackfellow's brother ;
And when he came back, bad with *witcher* (that's itch)
Well plastered the beggar with sulphur and pitch."
" *Oh ! give us the fight, Jack !*" " *As gospel, that's true ;*
And, now, for the *first* time I'll give it to you.
D'ye mind *in the drought*, when *on none* of the stations
A lizard was left or an ounce of black's rations,
The niggers stream'd in and soon started to fight,
Because the poor wretches had nothing to bite.
Well, having to ride down to old Miemukca,
And, meaning to camp out, I carried some tucker,
But found, s'elp me Bob, all the creeks in full flood.
And, *sure as you're there*, boys, 'twas frothing fresh *blood* ;
So, *thinking* big fighting was going on higher,
I gruell'd my Nanto, and, *call me a liar*,
If *ten thousand* blacks were not smother'd in *gore*
And up to their *ruddy* sharp elbows in *more* ;
So what did I do but just gallop among 'em
And this way and that way like empty shucks flung 'em ;
Then roared out—you know how I roar—Just you *drop* it !
I'll have no more fighting ! You ruddy fools, stop it !
Well, that was enough boys, they knock'd off and sed
" *We too muchee hungry, you give it us bread ?*"
" *Bread ! any amount !* So come up to the spring
And don't you forget all the wounded to bring !"

You know where the spring is—just inside the gap.
Well ! hang me, before I had time to unstrap
My *bluey*, that had all the tucker inside,
The niggers roll'd up like the sea at flood-tide,
And that with a curious rustle like snakes
Through *shedding dried blood* from their hides in wide
flakes ;

It *did* make me cackle, for there they were dotted
All over, as birdseye swell neckties are spotted.
And *wasn't they hungry !* You'd better believe
I hadn't much left when they'd finish'd their feed.
Then, what do you think, boys, they sat up all night
To warble like ten thousand tomcats, and skite ;
And devil a wink I'd have got had I not
Gone over with waddy and polish'd the lot."

" Yes, John, from old Virgil you've taken the tip
And *polishing* been till you've managed to strip
With utter good taste and consummate ability
From *true* battle story the least probability.
But *now*, if you'll tell us a much truer yarn
On Fame's blazing scroll a fresh good mark you'll earn !"

" Oh ! all right, deah boy ; I mean, *Scrubby Old Stink* !
You *might* have provided some decentish drink.
My tongue must be hanging low down on my belt
From drought, that *around here* can *always* be felt.
Your credit is gone ? Well, allow me to say
It cannot *knock up* on *the rest of the way*.
But, seeing there's nothing to tipple bar tea,
Just pour out a pannican, *full up*, for me.

Then stretch your long ears for the essence of truth—
 The stuff *I've* been suckled on right up from youth."
 "Well, put some on tap, man ; we thought it was *gas*."
 "Excuse me, dear sir, if I call you an ass !
 But, look here, *time's money*, *want* follows on *waste*,
 And so some more essence of truth you shall taste.

Old Buffalo Bill and his spindle-shank'd "cowboys"
 Some pumpkins might think themselves—tell you as how,
 boys,
 We'd knock 'em all into a *crimson* cock'd hat
 At warrigal riding ——" "And pitching." "What's
 that ?

Truth drawing too fine? Well, I never did try to,
 And neither will *you* if you *hate lies* as I do !
 But listen one moment ; you've got as much prattle
 As mob of sweet, *long-hair'd*, young towny-bred cattle.
A fellow can't hear himself speak." "What a pity !"
 "My friend, you're a long way from handsome or witty ;
 So please to *close down* while I tell you ——" "More
 lies !"

"I'll soon tell you something to cause more surprise.
 But, *gentlemen*, all, I appeal for protection !"
 "You mean *that you're dying for whisky* injection
 By way of the throttle ; but trot out your fact—
 'Twas something about some wild colt that you back'd."

"Yes, '*Spectress*' colt by old 'Sparrowhawk,' you know,
 The man-eating stallion that ran down at Brunow.
 Then, as for the colt, he was ditto *you* bet
 And so I just kept him about as a *pet*.

Well ! *One thing* it did not cost *me* much to treat him
If Sundowner call'd, he'd just stick up and eat him,
Till soon the home paddock was sprinkled with *boots*
And skulls that had their hair grubbed by the roots ;
But swagsmen *grew scarce*, so I thought I'd best back
him."

" Why did you not *lunge* him for *ten years*, then pack
him."

" O *pack him*, be sugar'd, he'd eat off your leg ;
But if I'm to go on, attention I beg !"

" *Attention*, you fellows ! Now go it, my hearty
We'll all be as mum as a deaf and dumb party ;
But guzzle some tea, Jack, you're husky as blazes,
Then ball off your yarn, with it's too truthful phases."
" O ! phases be hanged ! but I tell you he fought us,
And spooks would have flown if he only had caught us,
But Paddy McGrath got him roped to a post,
And swore that he'd serve the young *something* on toast.
Yes ! right you are, Pat, if he don't break his scrag,
Said I, as I *Rairey'd* him round with a bag ;
Then knotted some rope in a Chinaman's puzzle
And fasten'd it on to the brute for a muzzle,
Then girthed on my colt-breaking saddle, and then
Just forked him and sang out : '*Now ! Let him go, men !*'
Which let go they did, when Iscariot sails
Clean over the six foot six stockyard top rails.
Then giving a yell
Like scorch'd demon from hell,
And just as burnt brimstone I happen'd to smell,

He rose from the ground as a stone would from catapult
 And turn'd, high in air, a complete double somersault,
 Which made me observe, 'This beats Bannagher, Jack !'
 When down came a thundering thump on my back ;
 Yes, *one, two, and three*, and 'twas more than a joke,
 For broken, high up, was hind leg of the moke !

This flying-like flail—

Each *buck—over his tail*,

Behaved itself worse than a mad mallee rail ;
 And as he *kept going* I roared out to pot him,
 When Paddy McGrath got his rifle and shot him !"
 "The next." "Well, I'll tell you about my old Snider
 With telescope sights, that was death to a *spider*
 At *six hundred yards*, while a *bluebottle fly*
 I *never did miss* when 'twas buzzing sky high.
 From eaglehawk, too, when 'twas sailing serenely,
 I'd cut, *with two shots*, off its pinions so cleanly
 That leaving the body to drop at my feet
 They'd prowl *after rabbits* on regular beat !
 But if it was *quills* I was after, why *then*, sir,

The *wings* I declare

I'd bring down, while in air

The body bobb'd on to grown pinions agen, sir !"
 "Oh, *bully for you !* After *that* old De Rogey,"
 In *decency* ought to just give up the bogey,
 In bag put his head, or go home to his mother ;
 But *now* you'd best *finish us* off with ANOTHER !"

"You want me to tell how I got that *supply*
 In Rafferty's well when all swore she was dry ?

'Twas easy to me, as to *Moses*, you bet,
 We both struck a rock and got flooded with *wet* ;
 But *Mo* only paddled in liquor that gush'd out—
 I sixty feet flew up a shaft when it rush'd out—
 Just put in a shot,
 And the water, *red hot*,
 Burst out with a roar from Old Beelzebub's pot ;
 And there I was balanc'd, with shovels and things
 A *dozen* miles high on the boss of all springs ;
 And had they not sent up a special balloon
 I'd water be *getting*, I guess, on the moon.
 And "——" *That will do, Jacky, you could not rise higher*
 If shot into *Mars* as our own peerless liar !
 Now turn into bed, boys, and blow out the light
 We've had enough *essence of truth* for one night."



THAT SEA SERPENT.

Captain Oliver (of the S.S. "Emu") and his^d supercargo agreed in saying that the monster found by them on the coast of Suarrow must have been 60 feet in length and of about 70 tons weight ; that it had two heads, resembling those of horses, two backbones, and also that portions of its hide were covered with brownish hair. Unfortunately, however, as the creature had been dead—in a tropical climate—for three months, the effluvium was so terrible that they had great difficulty in securing the heads which they had brought to Sydney. See Australian February papers, 1899. Thinking those mariners must have diagnosed that specimen incorrectly, I venture to append *my* version of the case.

NEPTUNE'S COBS.

Since Neptune wax'd old and from wave throne was
 roll'd
 Outside into mythical fable,
 His high stepping clippers no deck hands or skippers
 To *properly* sight have been able ;

But *none* did I say ? I'll retract, if I may,
 For captain and crew of the "Emu"
 On coast of Suarrow, glean'd heads, bones, and marrow
 Of once prancing dolphin and seamew.

They'd wander'd together thro' cycles of weather,
 Evading each curious stranger ;
 Yet thrusting may be just an ear from the sea
 When baiting at submarine mangee.
 But, waxing too fat on whale, herring, and sprat,
 They kick'd up their heels and went racing
 One topping high tide, and were cast up *broadside*
 On shore—some tall cocoanuts facing.

Apollo look'd down with a tropical frown
 And shot the old cobs with his arrows,
 But niggs from the village who came down to pillage,
 Could never get near with their barrows.
 Indeed, e'en the breeze and the cocoanut trees
 Near kill'd were by essence of hippos ;
 More deadly than sin, one as well might be in
 That terrible *tiger* of Tippo's.*

For built, I declare, had still *powerful* pair
 The *strongest* of rampart around 'em,
 And none within hail could with safety well sail,
 Yet brave Captain Oliver found 'em.
 And then, with his super-cargo in a stupor
 Of wonderment, scraped a big funnel
 Thro'—pardon me, *stink*, and before one could wink
 Returned with *nag's heads* by his tunnel.

* Tippo Saib's tiger.

They bottled much smell, two *brain caskets* as well,
Then steam'd in a hurry to Sydney,
Reporting *twin snake* of queer *Siamese* make,
Hair brownish and too tender kidney ;
But never agen will those nautical men
Be sailed with at less than a *mile*, Sir ;
That essence of *cob* was a *serious* job,
And none are permitted to smile, Sir,
March 6th, 1899.



OLD MYALL TREE.

TO AN OLD MYALL TREE IN THE FAR NORTH-WEST.

Old myall tree, with twisted trunk and limbs—
Like sylvan gnome by Nature's hand distorted—
You seldom hear a dryad's tuneful hymns,
Though in your crown strange dryads have disported ;
That is, when winter with attendant rain
Brief visits paid, and brought our Austral Flora.
To brighten bushland with her modest train—
Too seldom seen by bushmen, who adore her.

When summer's heats o'er sandy wastes prevail,
And Nature gasps as if in dissolution,
The sultry winds amongst your branches wail
Like mourners sad o'er cloudland's destitution.

But now, as traveller with fevered frame
Plods slowly past for some far distant station,
A famish'd crow—his eyes intent to claim—
From your top twig croaks forth his exultation ;

“ I'll have them yet ! you'll ‘ peg out ’ sure as fate ! ”
Is what, with croak and pantomime, he's saying ;
“ A little while is all I'll have to wait ;
But *die at once*—my banquet you're delaying.”
For long, long miles that crow on demon wing
Has dogg'd the traveller with death to taunt him ;
And so, although you have him now to sing,
As constant vocalist you cannot vaunt him.

Like sun-dried bushman dying for a drunk,
You somehow live until the rain, descending,
With sap pervades those portions of your trunk
Which still have pores, through which it may be wending.
A veteran are you of countless years,
While time and drought your uncouth bole have shattered ;
On one branch only some grey-green appears—
The rest are moribund, or round you scattered.

An ancient lizard may at times regard
Your rugged form with eyes of fish-like wonder,
To think that droughts which tried his being hard
Did *not* succeed in making you go under.

But so like death have you appeared in life
 That, as a sheaf ingathered, death might pass you ;
 For bare existence yours the constant strife,
 And as a mummy arborists should class you.

[NOTE.—In the north-west of South Australia (written of by me) we sometimes do not see any bush flowers for several years, but on the return of wet winters the country is covered with bright though scentless flowers—everlastings predominating. The birds also, which are conspicuous by their absence in times of drought, return with the flowers, and what for long months was simply a dreary desert becomes transformed into a sylvan Garden of Eden—with a few serpents in it.—R. B.]



OLD RUGGY.

Surely that traveller's horse I know,
 Loaded with rider and swag :
 A cripple, yet with a jaunty go—
 The wreck of a right good nag.
 Those full round eyes and those keen cocked ears
 Those nostrils firm and square—
 My thoughts hark back to the bygone years,
 When all things seemed so fair.

Ruggy, old horse, is it really you ?
 Rowel-marked, scraggy, and blind—
 You, that as trustiest steel were true,
 Fleet as the hurrying wind ;
 You, that a stockrider's claim could test
 To be as a horseman known
 You, that have tried the seat of the best,
 And many a boaster thrown !

Never, for you, was the longest day
 Too long in those times gone by—
 Others gave in, yet you still were gay
 When we to the yard drew nigh ;
 Warrigal bullock, and cunning old cow
 All dodges would try in vain :
 I seem to feel you under me now,
 Once more on the moonlit plain ;

'Midst rock-crown'd hills, how the echoes woke
 To mock the rattle and din,
 When back from the gates the cattle broke
 Their haunts on the run to win ;
 To gallop had we, though thick and low
 Was mallee, and bad the light,
 For into the yard the mob *must* go
 E'er we turn'd out for the night.

'Twas ticklish work in that woodland dim,
 For a cannon'd branch or stem
 Meant broken crown or a shatter'd limb—
 But who *then* thought of them !
 For Frank on " Cricket " or " Lightning " led,
 With clattering rush and shout ;
 You made no mistake, for you had your head,
 And the cattle they came out.

Yes, you could gallop for miles on end,
 Turn in the length of a stride ;
 How you astonish'd our English friend,
 Got up to the nines to ride !

The very first turn and his knees they flew
To snap at his clean-shaved chin ;
Then down on the ground he sat, while you,
The beast through the gates put in.

A pretty close shave for you and me
Was that on the Gum Creek's bank,
When big steer ripped the pant from my knee
And left his mark on your flank ;
You turn'd like a top as those horns glanc'd by,
Then off at a tangent flew ;
That pretty close shave, it had been my last
With many a horse but you.

How fugitive time has hurried away
With seasons of drought and rain !
While scatter'd abroad are those comrades gay
I never may meet again ;
And jovial Frank, the first in the fun—
The devil-may-care and free ;
He'll never ride more, for his race is run—
The course grows short for me.

I'll have you, old friend, from your owner here—
I'll give him a younger nag ;
I'll offer a price that he'll take, no fear !
You shall not carry a swag !
Not many more summers you'll likely see,
Yet brighten you will with a spell ;
And, while in the paddocks you wander free,
I'll dream of the old times still.

TO A BUSH ANT.

Imp vastly praised by Lubbock and by Smith
In modern times—by Solomon in olden ;
My testimony I will add forthwith,
And *bought* experience, methinks, is golden ;
But first I'll say, the *paragons* they met
Were, with their wisdom, *modest* and *retiring*,
While you, my anything but pleasing pet,
For too much *prominence* are aye aspiring.

“Go to the ant,” quoth Solomon, but you
Are always *coming* when you are not wanted
With some confounded piracy in view,
And board your prizes with a pluck undaunted ;
Yet, even so, if you but came alone
To bear off plunder I'd not care ; but ah me !
Of sugar soon there will be likely none
If foraged for by such o'erwhelming army.

With insolence unparalleled you swarm
On raging owner of the sweets you rifle,
And though for thousands he may make it warm,
With hosts like yours such slaughter is a trifle ;
Besides, while dying you exhale perfume
Which, freely added to your vicious biting,
Just starts him prancing round the bushland room
While *Watts' hymns* he's *piously* reciting.

With streams of tar he fain would moat his store,
You cross that moat on dust or other bridges,
While clothes and carpets soon are coated o'er
With stinking stains which stick to them like midges ;
A bright idea pops into his head—

“*Hot ashes !* Yes ! against them I'll be scoring.”
The thatch by whirlwind with his *patent* fed
Is wrapp'd in flames, like angry ocean roaring.

The conflagration having died away,
Though blacken'd stumps continue on still smoking,
The owner, in a melancholy way—

Like Marius—around the wreck goes poking :
“Confound it all !” says he unto himself,
“This *is* a mess” ; but here, his dual garment
He hunteth, not for soul-destroying pelf,
But what he calls, “a cursed little varment.”

His roaming dog he puts upon the chain,
Then you, and yours, investigate the matter ;
And when he cometh, presently, again,
He finds *poor* Carlo mad as any hatter.
A broody hen he shuts beneath a coop,
And leaves her there to muse upon her folly,
Next day there's surely *cocky-leekie soup*,
While chuckie's friends are lost in melancholy.

The thirsty swagman, baked by Sol's fierce heat,
And bluey loaded, staggers through the mulga
Till, wearied out, he seeks a shady seat—
To rise in haste, with words extremely vulgar ;

For though he searched suspiciously around
Ere plumping down, with muttered "No darn'd ants
here,"

He might have known what travellers have found—
There is *no* spot in bushland quite from ants clear !

Perhaps you're sleeping in your little nest,
Or extra busy, darksome chamber digging,
Or hugging pupæ to your gentle breast ;
Or future slaves from other ants' nests priggish ;
But all the same, directly Jack or Bob
Flings down his drum with weary sigh and settles
To camp awhile, you're always on the job,
And touch him up like sharpest stinging nettles.

Those prying savants, arm'd with microscope,
Nice modest ants might cultivate with pleasure ;
But were they *here*, and had with *you* to cope,
In formic slaughter they'd exhaust their leisure.
Midst sylvan wilds *I've lived* with you, and so
Your little foibles I am up to fully ;
And this I'll say, who surely ought to know
You're just a vile, outrageous little bully.



TO A DUST STORM.

Outrageous Thug,¹ detestable and vast,
Whose vile ambition 'tis to choke us all,
On rushing wings of burning northern blast
You victims hunt, and on them fiercely fall.
No bushland fortress may your onslaught stay
When, lion-like, you bound upon our tracks,
For though usurping all the face of day
You deftly swarm through mouse-denying cracks.

When first the surface of the earth you raise
And hurl it high, then whirl it round in glee,
We waste few moments in a mute amaze,
But breathe a prayer and from you swiftly flee ;
Then if a tenement be haply nigh
We to it bolt and bang the futile door,
While through the roof vindictively you fly
And shake the building with resounding roar.

Why hurry so ? You little more can do ;
The *hut is full*, and so am *I* about :
Thus, spite the efforts of your gusty crew,
Like surplus freight you'll soon be *crowded out*.
Pray spare the thatch—you enter fast enough
And have of missiles far too great a store ;
A flying rafter might come rather rough,
But pebble-stones more certainly will score.

1. Thug—Indian strangler.

Don't breach the walls, for you have come to stay
And make things lively till the sun goes down.
At mud-pie mixing you will, childlike, play
With grime and sweat upon my visage brown.
Would you were mortal and were forced to eat
The filthy pabulum you thrust on me ;
For then, perchance, though not princely neat,
Than chimney-sweep I'd sometimes cleaner be !



SYD KIDMAN'S GHOST.

I'd left behind earth's whirling sphere, the Unknown I
explored,
And to the high empyrean my wand'ring spirit soared ;
Through frozen space in endless night it plied its eager
wings,
And, as it miles by millions sped, met queer uncanny
things ;
Yes, portly ghosts of " Guinea Pigs," Church Deacons
late of earth,
Who Liberator frauds had run, now caused Satanic
mirth,
For goblins roasted them on stars till lava-like there
flow'd
From out their flame-vexed writhing souls the molten
guinea gold.

On tatter'd scraps of *wildcat scrip* it's knavish vendors
fled,

Pursued by ghastly suicides, a widow's at their head.

Fierce draggled doves rakes' wraiths pursued—plague-
stricken hawks in shape.

From slander'd nuns a Slattery was striving to escape,
But dodging on his part was vain, for in the photo-
sphere

Of solar furnace he was cast ; I saw him disappear
With hosts of other lying ones in fierce supernal flame,
Whose fuel they are bound to be—its volume to main-
tain,

Indeed, the great majority seem'd hastening to a fate
They certainly could not attain through Peter's golden
gate.

Anon, a spectral form I met that I could plainly note
Had worn in life a slouch'd felt hat and weather-worn
top coat.

As dark as night its hair and eyes had evidently been,
While for a bushland ghost 'twas staid with contemp-
lative mien.

Yes, well I knew that wanderer, who paused with ab-
sent frown,

And so I said, "How goes it Syd? Why, when did
you come down?"

"I don't know if 'twas *up* or *down*," my old friend
answer'd me,

"But I have been a trip to Mars, a million goats to
see—

All horns and hair—they call'd 'em beasts ; and so the
world's around

The star Arcturus¹ then I tried, but there I only found
A big boned breed of grizzly bears the giants live on
there—

Though oftentimes a giant finds himself *inside* a bear ;
I did not touch those brutes, you bet, so still kept on
the go

To see the red Antares² steers in central Scorpio ;
But, there, the way we travel here a caution is to
snakes,

A million miles an hour, boss—no friction and no
brakes ;

We used to think the Birdsville track a *caution* hard to
beat ;

I'm on my way to Rigel³ now—the butchers must have
meat.

I don't deal much in Taurus beasts—they're staggy,
wild, and coarse ;

The Aries wethers are the same, but that you know of
course ;

Yet stop ! I did not tell you how I call'd at Spika,⁴
where

The pure-bred heifers do not breed—they keep no old
cows there.

I caught a crab in Cancer land and brought away the
claws

And saw them last at Leoville beneath a lion's paws.

1. Arcturus, *alpha* Bootes. 2. Antares, *alpha* Scorpio. 3. Rigel, *beta*
Orionis. 4. Spika, *alpha* Virginis.

But yarning here won't run the show, so, if you dodge
old Nick,
We'll meet again in Hindley Street some evening at
the Vic.

Syd's restless spook then disappear'd amid the phantom
throng,
And presently methought I heard the crack of stock-
man's thong,
As if a mob of cows he'd bought and started them away
From country round the Southern Cross, low down in
Milky Way ;
But no ! When shortly I awoke, I found I'd dream-
ing been,
And then remember'd in the mail Syd Kidman I had
seen !

NOTE.—If Syd Kidman, the travelling partner of the firm of Kidman Brothers—the widely known stockbuyers of South Australia—should be more constantly *on the go* in the next world than he has been in this, then the ghost of the Wandering Jew must grow pale with envy and take a back seat, unless it chooses to knock itself up in trying to keep pace with Sydney's.—R. B.



THE BUSHMAN'S LAST DRUNK

WITH SUITABLE APOLOGIES TO E. A. POE.

On a scorching summer's morning an old horseman, sun-
stroke scorning,
Looking like a fly-hive swarming with those insects waging
war,

Reached a shanty by the roadside round which careless
hands had strewed wide
Broken bottles by the broadside, empty bottles by the
score—
Bottles that had done their duty to inflame a social sore—
Mute mementoes on Time's shore.

To the shanty-keeper then he handed proudly every
penny
Of his cheque—not keeping any. “Oh, the boss would
keep the score :”
And the landlord and landlady, each of reputation shady,
Smiled and smirked and called him *Daddy*—looked as if
great love they bore
For that frowsy, foul-mouthed fellow—love they'd lavish
evermore—
While of coin he had a store.

“Do a whisky? *Rare stuff* this is! Oh! it's our *shout*,
ain't it, Missis?
Who'd leave this for ladies' kisses? Here, you'd better
have some more!
Then I'll take your horse to water. *Feed!* there's boggins
in this quarter,
Grass and saltbush, and he orter fatten round the
bloomin' door.”
Here the lady poured more liquor. Dad drank his—upon
the floor—
They their poison tilted o'er.

Like a corpse—in close verandah, fly-besprinkled, in his
hand a

Dirty glass, he'd done it grand, eh?—Daddy lay upon the
floor—

When the fierce sun next morn rising—all intent upon
surprising

Cringing caitiffs, whose carousing had defiled the night
before

Roused them (swarms of flies their eyes in) just to clamour
at the door—

Parched and fevered, at the door.

“Roust up, Dad! Come, roust up, Sonny! 'Cause you
see we've got no money,

So no bloomin' score to run he won't allow us any more—

You're a bloated money order!” Here old Dad rose in
disorder,

And with bummers a thick border gained admittance at
the door—

On the rude bar leaned his elbow, while uprose his liquor
score—

How those bummers drank and swore!

Just a stride of Time, the rover, during which old Dad in
clover,

That is, more than “half seas over”—has been snoring on
the floor,

Sees his pleasures rudely ended; for—with hundred pounds
expended,

And his nag in pawn's rescinded his *carte blanche* to swell
his score—

On the "high horse" is the landlord, as he growls—"You'll
get no more,

You old *Bummer* ! There's the door !!!"

Poor old Dad—his pulses throbbing, beastly blue things
round him bobbing,

Not a shilling left for robbing, staggers shaking from the
door—

And, with swarming flies attending, takes a track that soon
is blending

With the scrub which seems ne'er ending—he will bummers
treat no more :

Scared by crows, not cheered by clergy, seeks his soul the
silent shore—

Seeks the unknown silent shore !



TO A MOSQUITO.

Minute musician—like the cats nocturnal—

In song detestable you much excel ;

Yet, unlike cats, you sing not love eternal—

Of bloodshed only do your solos tell ;

And when in choruses you're singing o'er me,

While members of your spectral band descend

For means of sustenance to fiercely bore me,

I feel right here your vocal chords should end.

Boots would amuse you, and mistake the window,
The lamp, or looking-glass for lawful game,
Yet when from vampire wings I feel the wind, Oh !
I would for vengeance Jewish law proclaim ;
Yea, " blood for blood ;" but even if I got it
'Twould be my own, and not for use once more ;
As poison, even, could I then allot it,
'Twould lie untasted—you prefer fresh gore.

Your voice is wonderful—'tis high soprano,
But pleasing most when read of far away
On mighty Amazon or sunny Arno—
As chamber music it is much too gay ;
Then vanish with it to the swamp or stockyard—
Ah ! wretch, I've got you—no I haven't, though—
With teasing burr you twit me—Do not mock, pard,
But while you're able pack your trunk and go.



TO A BLOW-FLY.

O filthy vulture of the insect world !
The loathing you inspire no tongue can tell,
When, with loud buzzing, busy wings unfurled,
You sally forth upon your mission fell,
Guided afar by keenest sense of smell,
That laughs to scorn the bloodhounds. Thing of ill
Fiend-like, your business you perform too well.

For poor maimed lambs with living tortures thrill,
 When from fierce wild dog's fangs they 'scape for *you* to
 kill !

Your horrid zeal to propagate your kind
 Outrivals e'en the mad dog's rage to bite,
 Or tigers to destroy. Oh, wretch, designed
 For foulest work ! You with obscene delight
 Gloat o'er destruction, and with headlong flight
 Speed to the carnival, that death may spread
 Or strife strew broadcast. To all creatures sight
 You are a pest to shudder at and dread ;
 And, could deep curses kill, then were your kind all dead



THE BOSS'S NIGHTMARE.

(A FACT).

McCullem reclines on his bachelor's bed—
 A Scotchman canny and old is he ;
 On mutton and bread he has heartily fed,
 And fill'd—*well, nearly*—all chinks with tea.
 Besides at Glenlivet he's frequently nipp'd,
 With nobody there to keep the score,
 And now in his sleep he is horribly hipp'd
 By dreamland's virulent imps galore.

Those incubi mask as fierce Union crowd,
 And drag Mac down to the great woolpress.
 He dreams he is dumb, but uncommonly loud
 Are *nasal* plaints of his deep distress.
 Now merciless wretches thrust gag in his mouth
 And fiend-like gloat o'er each gurgling groan ;
 But he breaks from their clutches, consumed by
 drouth,
 And, yes, through window his *teeth* has thrown !

VALUABLE ADVICE GRATIS.

Dear elderly Bosses—wherever you be—
 Who *purchase* your pearly incisors,
 Do swear against spirits and take only tea,
 Unless you'd be taking cockshies, sirs,
 With ivories, costing ten guineas perhaps,
 Which should be in water or waters—
 When, after much nipping at whisky or
 schnapps,
 You've solemnly roll'd to your quarters !



THE VICTORIA PARK STEEPLECHASE.

RUN JUNE 2, 1900.

The barrier rises, and off like a flash
 Away on their journey the thoroughbreds dash,
 O'er emerald turf where the cloud shadows creep
 Until the first obstacle gaily they leap.

Then over big fence and stone wall by the lawn
The gay racing silks of the jockeys are borne,
By horses as lithe as fleet greyhounds, and bold
As ever were heroes' fierce chargers of old.

O'er fence at first turn to the one-mile still leads
The favourite brown mare, and Brutus precedes
The Glorious gelding, while others appear,
All waiting their chances close up at the rear.
But now at the double see Orb drawing out,
Till leading his field by three lengths, or about,
From Brutus, brown Onkaparinga, and Duke ;
While Wirrawa's out of it—barring a fluke.

Now clear of his horses, at top of the hill,
The Glorious gelding is twenty lengths still,
With Duke running clear of Conphrosyne's son,
And the favourite still in the thick of the fun.
But, ah ! at the first of the treble comes down
The gallant old Orb, now a maimed heap of brown ;
But what does that matter ? Past grandstand and lawn
The rest of the field like a whirlwind has torn.

At jump at six furlongs there's changes of place,
And Hotspur—who strikes hard—is out of the race.
While Colewort's bay daughter and Wellington's son
By turns in the lead round the back of course run ;
Black Brutus, grey Snapshot, and Wirrawa all
Clean jumping their fences, and well within call ;
While Onkaparinga—who's whipping them in—
Is still persevering, with faint hopes to win.

Now game little Brutus is leading the race
From Wellington's son at too pumping a pace,
For striking the fence at the home turn he's done,
Though still the first money great Duke has not won ;
For Colefire, the sticker, is first in the straight :
"She'll win it !" "She will not !" Defeat is her fate.
For, now, through sheer stamina—not by a fluke—
She's beaten two lengths by that stayer, The Duke.

L'ENVOI.

A feeling of sadness is mine as I write,
For out on the course in the fast-fading light
Two sharp reports ring ; and, oh, hardness of fate !
No more will two grand horses race up the straight.
No more shall they, foam-flecked, to weigh in return,
No more the loud plaudits of glad winners earn ;
But now of their triumphs let sporting men tell :
Poor Brutus and Orb—we must bid you farewell.

June 4, 1900.



ISANDHLWANA.

On January 22nd, 1878, a British Column under Major Durnford was attacked at Isandhlwana by 25,000 Zulus, and was almost annihilated. The British soldiers fought gallantly, but were overwhelmed by a storm of assegais. The remnant of the 24th Regiment formed a square and fought while their ammunition lasted, then died, each man in his place, and fighting to the last. The 1st Battalion of the 24th Regiment lost 500 men and officers, including Colonels Pullein and Durnford.

Where, vexed by heat and sudden storms,
Rude kopjes rear their rugged forms,
Is Isandhlwana, by it pace
Brave sentinels of British race,
Who watch the jackals slinking by
As fade the stars from morning sky.
And listen till from hill to valley
Shall sharply sound the loud reveille.

The British force, of hundreds strong,
Is pitted 'gainst a dusky throng
Of warriors, who understand
The tactics of that savage land,
And who, from boyhood bred to arms,
No tremors feel midst wars alarms :
Than Cetewayo's Impis none
More truly brave have battles won.

The creeping grey of chilly dawn
Is merged in golden flush of morn,
And yawning soldiers bend their eyes
On glowing orb in eastern skies,
Whose warmth with penetrating ray
All lurking chills shall drive away,
Till night's discomforts soon will be
A near forgotten memory.

Full many a tinkling cattle bell
Is heard in near adjacent dell,
Whose dusky drivers idly smoke,
And slyly with the soldiers joke ;
For peaceably has passed the night,
Though some, perchance, might dream of fight—
A dream they laughed at, when they woke,
As dreamland's mocking wizard's joke ;
For has not Chelmsford's gallant host
From prowling Zulus purged the post
Too well for those whose bosoms glow
To prove their prowess on the foe ?

The Twenty-Fourth, which proudly bears
A storied name, the campaign shares
With levies raw of Kaffirs, who
To conquerors continue true,
As messengers to fleetly run,
And plunder when the fight is won ;
Though as the wind-tossed reeds are they
When carnage stalks in deadly fray.

A stir in camp as from the rear
Some active horsemen now appear,
With rocket-guns, to sharply teach
The Zulus modern weapon's reach ;
And leading them see Durnford ride,
Who, though in fighting fields untried,
By valiant heart impelled, would fain
Reap glory on the crimson'd plain ;

And need for all his courage yet
May, ere it close, this day beget.

For hark ! a scout to brave Pullein
Reports some prowling Zulus seen ;
And Durnford, who assumes command,
Leads forth in haste a gallant band
To prove the soldier's statement true,
And punish well the daring crew,
If such should lurk with prying eyes,
By boulders screened on rugged rise ;
While Pullein and his men remain
The camp's protection to maintain.

No skulking spies who shun the fight
Offend stern Durnford's eager sight,
But foes who to the onslaught speed
With strength and dash of desert steed—
Who haste, by hopes of plunder led,
To slay the cause of *scorn*—not dread,
And to the challenge rifles' ring
Fresh forces to the battle bring.
As locust swarm, with steadfast flight,
A sudden gloom like falling night
On landscape casts, as on they speed
To devastate with boundless greed,
So active foes in legions glide
From ravine dark and steep hillside,
With savage will to sweep away
The handful who their charge would stay.

Loud wakes the din, for rifle's crack
By ringing shriek is echoed back ;
And still the bow which, sickle-like,
From earth that martial band would strike,
Each moment thickens ; Zulus seem
Like countless locust swarm to teem,
And careless, all, of carnage spread,
Rush onward o'er their prostrate dead,
Till Durnford, brave, must fain recall
His scattered force and backward fall
Within the camp, where prudent mind
No hasty laager has designed,
But left it bare of breastwork strong,
Exposed to rush of savage throng.

Too late the movement, for around
The garrison the foe is found,
Like famished wolves intent to taste
The lost one's blood on frozen waste ;
Death busy in their ranks is nought—
To *kill* employs their every thought.
On, on, they rush, while in the rear
The native allies yield to fear
And flee, as hares from beaters fly
At hidden sportsman's hands to die ;
While those who would the panic stay
Themselves are helpless borne away,
By assegais to fall transfixed
While in the headlong stampede mixed.
Hope proffers not one cheering ray—
Brute force from valour wins the day.

As grizzled lion, grim and gaunt,
Surrounded in his desert haunt,
On enemies will glare, intent
His boundless rage in blood to vent,
And, wounds unheeding, lingers till
Death stays his strength and savage will,
So Durnford, dreaming not of flight,
His soul pours forth in dauntless fight.
And heaps of Zulus round him lie
Ere fades the life-light from his eye,
While thickly strewn like grass is spread
A company already dead,
With carnage wrought on every side
To prove their valour ere they died—
An awful epitaph of worth,
Self-graven by the 'Twenty-Fourth.

Now, past a poet's pen or tongue
To tell the teaming thoughts that throng
The minds of those who, fighting still,
Face certain death on fatal hill.
The martyrs, when the flames leap high,
Or mariners, when surges fly
O'er wreck just sinking in the sea,
Bear such unto eternity,
But breathe not unto mortal ears
Their hopes, regrets, or future fears ;
So, silent stand with steadfast eye
The gallant Twenty-Fourth to die.

“Yield not an inch !” cries brave Pullein ;
“Remember country, friends, and Queen ;
The die is cast beyond recall—
Like Britons fight ! Like Britons fall !”
No time to cheer, but every eye
Throws back an eloquent reply ;
Hands, vice-like, clutch their weapons fast,
Of rigid steel stern lips seem cast ;
While hearts burn fiercely with a flame
That deadly danger cannot tame—
A flame the valiant soldier knows,
When fighting with relentless foes—
A flame which only hand of death
May quench, when speeds the parting breath.

The rifles, ringing o’er the din,
A bloody harvest sharply win,
For savage foes to earth are cast
Like tall trees by tornado’s blast.
Full grandly prove our men their claim
To Britain’s sons heroic fame ;
But hell, with loud exultant roar,
Its legions on them seems to pour ;
Unchecked by shot or crimsoned steel,
Though Zulu leaders lifeless reel,
The rest dash on and, with the rage
Of battle in their eyes, engage
Those heroes who, though all in vain,
In gate of death the strife maintain.

’Tis death ; for, as when ebb is past,
The ocean, urged by waking blast,

Rolls wave on wave with sullen roar
'Gainst tidal rocks which jut from shore,
The first, all shattered into spray,
From fixed resistance fall away ;
But rushing on, with rising tide,
Succeeding ones o'erleap and hide
The stubborn obstacles which still
Immovably their places fill ;
So pour the Zulus ; those before,
The thirsty desert drench in gore ;
Yet respite none the leaguered find,
Each breach is filled from foes behind ;
One savage falls—a hundred rise
To stab and hurl their assegais ;
Whilst cruel breasts to fitly shield
Their comrades slain for bucklers wield ;
Or, as his carnage Zanthus threw
On him who god-like Hector slew,
They hurl them with intent to break
The fence the British weapons make ;
Then through the gaps their masses cast,
O'erwhelming as the ocean vast.

All vainly now those doomed ones fight ;
A bloody mist obscures their sight.
In vain they in their fierce despair
Such ghastly wounds unheeding bear ;
For raging Zulus round them leap
Like cyclone vortex on the deep,
And surge upon them in their wrath
As would the waves in cyclone's path ;

Yet struggle still, like swimmers strong,
A few to battle with the throng ;
These sway a moment to and fro,
Then sink that horrid horde below ;
And soon a fierce, exultant host
Is left to plunder and to boast !
Those soldiers fell in far-off land,
A conquered yet unyielding band ;
And British hearts must henceforth feel
Through them the cruel Zulu steel ;
While truthful tongues shall say " Well done !
Heroic sons of Albion."



WEDDING CAKE AUGURIES.

WRITTEN FOR A YOUNG LADY ON RECEIPT OF HER WEDDING CAKE.

A youthful myrmidon—of " Rowland Hill"—
Who e'en on Sunday cannot quite be still,
Our entrance gate is passing briskly through,
Which, swinging backwards, clatters loudly too.
But I'll forgive him, for a box he brings
For me, I'm certain ! How the villain rings !
" A box for you, Sir," Betty says, and " Oh !"
The youngsters chorus, " Wedding cake, we know !"

True prophets they ! true prophets, aye, indeed !
Come, fly ye wrappers with a lover's speed ;
Come, creamy casket, raise your lid in haste,
That scent, impatient, may be join'd to taste.
" 'Tis wedding cake !" again the youngsters shout,
And he were senseless who such fact could doubt :
True lover's knot ! white tissue ! cards—and there
The pond'rous section lies revealed and bare.
Back, urchins ! Back ! Whilst, with an augur's sight,
I read the fortunes of the pair aright.

First, then, observe, where currants, spice, and peel,
Eggs, cream, and sugar, blend with miller's meal,
These of prosperity right fully tell
Of coming joys and comforts mingled well ;
While just above them, with their essence mix'd,
A broad, grey layer of rich sugar fix'd,
Unerring points to settled, calm delight
When flowing locks betray a tinge of white ;
Yet still with sighs the past is not deplored,
But future years seem years with pleasures stored,
And comely branches from the parent tree
Show bloom of knowledge that choice fruit shall be ;
When, though of youth is pass'd the vernal glow,
No twinge of failing sov'reign prime shall know ;
A glorious summer, cloudless and serene—
Life's springtide flowers and its snows between.
Now, crowning all, a spotless drift appears,
A tale unfolding of respected years ;
Of placid comfort, and of calm repose,
Which conscious worth and long-tried love bestows.

Enduring love, that—see the ribbon tied—
 Shall last unbroken to dark river's side—
 That mystic river, o'er which Faith can see
 A joyous vision of eternity !
 Such are my auguries ; and such, I pray,
 May be your fortunes from your wedding day.



JONES'S REVENGE.

A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY : FOUNDED ON FACT.

What man who loves right well his wife
 But knows the longing pleasure
 Experienced when business life
 Restores him to his treasure ?
 Then let him gauge his eagerness,
 Should *months* have marked their parting,
 And think how he would haste to press
 The form he pressed when starting.
 Jones hurries then to Twinlove House—
 Where dwells his fair Eliza—
 And, latchkey turning, creeps like mouse
 Upstairs to much surprise her ;
 His pulses throb, as beats the heart
 Of mouse in durance standing,
 And picturing her joyous start,
 He gains the wished-for landing.

'He ne'er has quailed at tempest's roar
In ocean's wildest weathers ;
But ah ! the sight through opened door
Of martial hat and feathers—
By military chief thrown there
On private boudoir table—
Excites a rage and wild despair,
To paint which I'm not able.

Of vengeance dread an oath he swears,
His eyeballs wildly starting ;
Then round the room he fiercely glares—
From husband's worse wrong smarting.
Blood ! Blood alone such wound atones—
He'll slay the whiskered villain,
And how he gloats o'er fancied groans
Exuding in the killing !

Like bloodhound gaunt, or tiger grim,
The guilty pair he's seeking ;
And, yes, it now appears to him
That somebody is speaking.
No ! Silence reigns ! Where can they be ?
Perchance in bedroom lurking !
The door is open. He will see,
And consummate the burking !

'Tis strange ! He notes no sign of life
That dormitory wide in,
But ah ! the wardrobe shakes ! His wife
Her lover has in hiding !!

With frantic bound he gains the door—
Great Cæsar ! what a donkey
He thinks himself, when to the floor
Leaps *organ-grinder's monkey* !

Here enters Mrs. Jones, who looks
At Jones with eyes that read all—
At once, as from the plainest books—
What's happened, and indeed all
Her husband's doubts about herself—
His murderous propensity ;
And *then* she rates the luckless elf
With merciless intensity.

And Jones ! Well ! Jones has been a fool—
Than he no one knows better—
So, while he seeks abasement's stool,
She storms, and he must let her ;
There'll be a lull, though, by-and-bye,
And then, depend upon it,
He'll have to buy—her tears to dry—
A spicy dress or bonnet !



THE NATURALIST AND THE ICHNEUMON FLY.

A certain benevolent bald-headed mortal

Loved butterflies, moths, and the whole of the race ;
In fact, with his yellow gauze net, he had caught all

The insects and ranged them in glass covered case ;
Yet, no ! lepidoptera lacked an example,
And so the collector still sought for a sample.

He offered rewards, and the bumpkins then brought in
“ *Old-ladies*” by hundreds, of “ *Death-heads*” a few,
With “ *Peacocks*” and others, while one a bat caught in

The tool-house, but went not home rich as a jew ;
Indeed, it was owing to excellent start he
Escaped being thrashed by the angry old party

All quest was in vain, till one day in a thicket

The insect collector was filled with delight,
For, ah ! it's great chrysalis—yes, 'twas the ticket—

'Neath sheet of loose bark just appeared to his sight,
And then, as he carried it home to his study,
An acre of smiles was his countenance ruddy.

In box of dry moss he bestowed his rich treasure,

And covered all safely with gauze like his net,
Then early each morning with liveliest pleasure

He'd lovingly gaze at his curious pet,
Till, oh, his vexation and dire aggravation
Were plainly betrayed by a sharp exclamation.

For, only too plainly, from hole in the chrysalis
A villainous ichneumon fly had come forth,
And had our poor savant sat down on a thistle, this
Cushion had caused him less anguish and wrath ;
But promptly thro' slender black wasp-looking pirate
He thrust a long pin, and felt sooth'd though still irate.

Like ass of bad Balaam that fly became vocal,
And to the old gentleman managed to say—
“ Though innocent insects to death you may poke all,
I'm tortured for taking my natural prey ;
We hatch'd are, in embryo moths, just to eat them—
You, prompted by Satan, impale and maltreat them



HERO WORSHIP.

An athlete as idol we set up,
And offer gross incense until
Too loud are his manners and get-up—
Too prone he his tankard to fill ;
Too prone to believe that without him
His clubmates must go to the wall,
When fulsome friends surely will flout him,
And sneer at decadence and fall.

“ The flannell'd young fool” (see Rud Kipling)
For batting or bowling we praise,
Until the vain-glorious stripling
Has head far too swelled for his bays.

Yes, when he goes forth to the wicket,
His antics suggest to your mind
A turkey-cock playing at cricket,
And call for queer comments unkind.

Then, why will the people and papers
So adulate good men till they
Distress all true friends by their capers,
For greatest of dons have their day ;
And then come neglect and chill greetings
To those who knew nothing save cheers,
Now doggedly courting fresh beatings,
And wincing at barrackers' jeers.

'Tis good to give just commendation
To him who deserves it, but not
To say that he licks all creation,
And stuff him with toadying rot.
Then cheer and clap hands if you will, Sirs,
When present at play above par ;
So modest as Moses may still, Sirs,
Remain your particular star.



THE FLIES.

Air—Bonny Dundee.

What came of the devils (for devils can't drown)
When fiend-possessed pigs to the water rushed down ?
Well, just in the nick, e'er the waves could surprise,
They popped from the porkers and into the flies ;

And ever since then, 'stead of plaguing one man,
They've fiendishly worried the whole of the clan,
As all here declare, to the rawest yahoo,
Who curses the flies and detested barcoo.¹

Chorus.

Then give me a tin—come, bring me a ton—
Of powder by which ev'ry fly may be done ;
Or square miles of paper—strong—catch 'em alive,
To capture and torture the whole buzzing hive ;
Or better still, Neroes by millions to catch
All pestilent fly chicks directly they hatch,
Then, legless and wingless, to fling them to—well,
A bakery hot with sulphurous smell.

They swarm on our dinners, they dive in our drinks,
They get in—the wretches—all wrinkles and chinks,
They crawl up our trousers, they creep down our backs,
And laugh in derision at blessings and whacks ;
They bung up our lips, and they bung up our noses,
They bung up our eyes, till each optic discloses
A lovely appearance, as if they'd had cracks on
From terrible “ mawleys ” of Mr. P. Jackson.

Chorus.—Then give me a tin, &c.

In garbage unclean they wade up to their knees,
To gather the germs of zymotic disease,
Then hasten to carry them round to mankind
With fiendish delight that is worse than unkind ;

1. Barcoo—Violent retching induced by the flies.

And then, when we're sick unto death, they just drop in
 Each poultice to poison, each potion to pop in.
 And, ah, such a buzzing they make when we're dead—
 You'd think they were gibing the soul that has fled.

Chorus.—Then give me a tin, &c.

They go for the horses, the cats, and the dogs—
 They go (but get into it there) for the frogs,
 'Cause froggy just bolts his tormentors, whose devils
 Must enter fresh flies to continue their revels.
 The blow-flies I hate, they are Satan-possessed—
 Mosquitoes are pleasant compared to the rest—
 For when the floodwaters in northern swamps lie,
 Ten devils at least lurk in each little fly.

Chorus.—Then give me a tin, &c.



REMINISCENCES AWAKENED.

[ON SEEING A SPARROW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AUSTRALIA AFTER
 TWENTY YEARS' ABSENCE FROM ENGLAND.]

Here, Johnny, just tell me what small bird is that I see
 In the Eucalyptus tree
 O'er the way,
 With it's jaunty, cunning air? 'Tis a sparrow, I declare.
 There's another! There's a pair!
 Chirping gay.

Yes ! they're sparrows, pert and bold ! Just such sparrows
as of old

 Oft I've caught, e'er trouble rolled
 O'er my head.

What a prize I thought one then ; and, oh, how my heart
beat when

 One approached the small brick pen
 Strewed with bread.

How my breath would almost stop when at last the bird
would hop

 For a bread crumb, on the top
 Of the trap,

And, suspecting not the trick, would light down on trigger-
stick,

 When with sharp metallic click
 Fell the flap.

How I rushed, with gleeful shout, to the trap, then paused
in doubt,

 For to get that sparrow out
 Was a task

Which oft ended in its flight to the nearest tree in sight ;
 To the bird's, or my delight,
 Need I ask ?

Many years have passed away since those days so blithe
and gay,

 And some playmate's hair is grey ;
 While the grave

Hides in many lands the rest ; aye, the bravest and the
best ;

Yet their memory to my breast,
Like a wave,

Rolls impetuous again, with a long attendant train—

Scenes of scented wood and lane,
At the sight

Of those sparrows on the tree—English sparrows, pert and
free ;

Yes, old times come back to me
Fresh and bright.



THE CORPSE IN THE SQUARE.

(A FACT).

Stretched on the withered grass
In city square he lay,
Where heedless footsteps pass
When breaks the summer's day.
Upturned, his staring eyes
Were blind to earthly things ;
Round gaping mouth the flies
All gaily plumed their wings.

That ghastly thing, so still,
To filthy flies a prey,
Which soon a grave must fill,
Was joyous yesterday ;

Then, full of spirits, he—
 And now—" Well, just look here,
 That bloke *too full* might be ;
 But 'twas wid bloomin' beer !"

Thus spake a *Boy in blue*
 Who had with measured tread
 Come callously to view
 The features of the dead,
 And added—" Ah, de brute,
 He's at his games agin ;
 I'll rousht him wid me boot,
 And run the blackguard in !"



SHE SYMPATHIZES WITH THEM.

" Dear Mrs. Jones, have you been reading
 Those really dreadful sweating cases ?"
 I have ; and, oh, my heart is bleeding—
 I'd like to scratch the monsters' faces !
 Just *think* of friendless creatures toiling
 From early morn to midnight mirk
 For barest pittance ! My blood's boiling—
 Don't talk to me of barb'rous Turk.

" Oh ! look here, Sarah, I must show you
 These really first-class shirts I bought
 At Starve and Sinwell's. Oh, I know you
 'll call there early, and you ought ;

You'd scarce believe it—good stuff in them—
Only two-and-three, my dear !
For double that I'd not begin them—
I'll always deal there while I'm here.

“ 'Tis harrowing ! It kills me nearly
To hear how starving wretches slave
At matchbox-making, late and early,
And *just* to keep them from the grave.
Oh, that reminds me, Mr. Cozen,
He charges quite a penny less
Than other tradesmen for the dozen,
And *that's* a saving, you'll confess.

“ Of course, a penny on such small things
Amounts to little, you may say,
But I *do* love to cheapen all things,
And oh, my dear, I make it pay !
Besides, for other people's sake, you
Really ought to beat them down ;
To ' Starve and Sinwell's ' shall I take you ? ”
“ Yes.” “ Well, let us start for town.”



THE HEARSE AS A CARRIAGE OF PLEASURE.

[NOTICE.—For every horse, or other beast of draught, drawing any coach, Berlin, landau, chariot, calash, *hearse*, caravan, chaise, or other *pleasure carriage*, the sum of fourpence.—*Vide* Toll Act, Black Horse Toll-gate, Sussex.]

Some people of pleasure right pleasantly prattle,
 And notably so the quaint Town Clerk of Battle,
 Who—*vide* the charge-board at Black Horse toll-bar—
 When bent on a frolic, sticks not at a car,
 But, doubtlessly guided by state of his purse,
 Rides forth in chaise, caravan, calash, or *hearse*;
 A *carriage of pleasure* is each in its way,
 And, to *our friend's fancy*, all equally gay,
 Though to an economist nought could be clearer,
 The *hearse* than its compeers must surely be dearer
 In matter of *tolls*, for plus those on the road,
 A *toll* meets the *hearse* when it sets down its load.



GRATITUDE.

If you'd see sport of cheering sort,
 However you may doubt it,
 Just hunt the mood called gratitude,
 Nor hesitate about it.
 Go save the life of neighbour's wife
 From burning house or river,
 Then count the cost, in friendship lost—
 The gain, in burn or shiver.

An outcast child from dreary wild
Of life, go hunt and take it
To home and heart, then dress it smart—
In fact, a prime pet make it.
Well, if a maid, I'm much afraid
She'll get you in hot water ;
Whilst if a lad, 'twill be as bad,
He'll bolt off with your daughter,

For cunning plan take smart young man—
More plausible the better—
In Co., and then with ink and pen
Do all your "biz" by letter.
As he was poor, you're very sure
He'll do for you discreetly ;
But by-and-by, with starting eye,
You'll find you're *done* completely.

"Poor relatives," it sorely grieves
Your feeling heart to view them—
So down at heels, in want of meals—
With favours you bestrew them.
They swarm each day ; indeed, they stay
From house and home to eat you ;
Then when you fail they'll at you rail
And evilly entreat you.

You warn a man of rascal's plan
To ruin him, or worse, Sir,
And you shall find some cut unkind
Rewards you, or a curse, Sir.

From "Torrens Dam," old classic "Cam,"
Or other lake or river,
You fish a friend, and in the end
He's *borrowing* for ever.

Yes, gratitude in churl or dude,
Wherever you pursue it,
You'll find so shy, that in the sky
Alone you're like to view it.
And yet, *sans* doubt, no toper stout,
As bad game should ignore it,
For in each case he's bound to face
A great big IN(N) before it.



GUSHINGTON JUNIOR'S VISIT TO ELYSIUM.

A SENTIMENTAL RECITATION.

How sweet it is at eventide to meet
One's "ownest own" in some sequestered nook,
Where limpid rill meanders at your feet
In tiny creek—I mean a sylvan brook—
Where o'er you sigh the grand old gumtree's sprays,
Where zephyrs waft the wattles' perfume sweet,
And where beneath chaste Dian's silver rays
The merry "jacks" their laughter oft repeat.

Ah ! sweet indeed, and who with manhood's heart
And vernal fire would as a hermit live,
When he could play the favoured lover's part,
And taste delight that only love can give ?
Ah ! who, indeed ? And so when Ethel Ann,
To my entreaties, whispered, " I'll be there,"
I thought myself a goddess-favoured man ;
But, oh, what goddess could with Ann compare !

That afternoon I deemed old Time was lame,
Or sleeping soundly, heedless of his trust ;
But in the end the evening duly came,
As through all centuries the evenings *must* ;
Then eagerly I watch'd the twilight die—
It really seemed so slowly, that a day
Might through its periods inertly fly,
And yet depart without so much delay.

With beating heart I wandered forth to find
My darling girl beneath our trysting tree.
Could it be thunder pealing on the wind,
When signs of lightning I could nowhere see ?
'Twas passing strange, for diadem of night
Acknowledged then no floating cloudland veil ;
The insect world proclaimed a strange delight.
That mournful cry ? a nasty curlew's wail !

I like not curlews. Ah ! a friendly root
Would claim acquaintance, when I saw it not,
So, firmly caught my unobservant boot,
And pulled me down to keep me near the spot.

I did not stay, but, brushing from my knees
Those pathway particles which loosely clung,
I hurried on—not wholly at my ease,
But what then happened shall be quickly sung:

Air—Tommy make room for your Uncle.

I whistled to show I was brave, then ;
But, oh, with a bark like a roar,
A snap at my breecks Cæsar gave them,
And took a large patch—and some more.
Thus lightened, I cleared a rail fence, then
But Taurus was waiting for me,
And, acting with *malice prepense*, then
Induced me to light in a tree.

How beautiful was silent star-gemm'd space
Then stretching o'er me in stupendous bow ;
But 'twas, indeed, a vile contrasting case,
With dual denizens of realms below.
Oh ! cruel fate ! those demons raged awhile,
Then waited there, to see if I would come
My darling wept at what she deemed my guile,
The while I prayed, till morning, in that gum.



PLANTING THE VINE.

A POST-DILUVIAN LEGEND.

INTRODUCTION.

M. Rawlin Crapaud—whom you may not all know—
Unlike our friend Pitcher, eschews the long-bow,
As this his true legend *re* Noah and the vine
Will prove without any vast effort of mine.

Friend Crapaud—a capable cuneiform scholar—
Translates in a manner most easy to follow,
And states that he got his facts straight from a par,
By Japhet, scratched into the “Ararat Star.”

Perhaps you may tell me that after a while
The writing, on even a Nineveh tile,
Might not be so fresh as on day of its baking,
And therefore that Crapaud mistakes might be making.

Pooh! Nonsense! The Potters to make shards were able
So awfully hard e’er the building of Babel
That, laughing at hammer, time’s action and rust,
They’d see even adamant turned into dust.

If still you doubt Crapaud, to Deluge-land go,
And delve all its mounds and old cities below,
Until you unearth contradiction ironical
By Noah himself in the “Stranded Ark Chronicle.”

THE LEGEND.

When old Captain Noah was planting the vine
Some notion had he, I imagine, of wine ;
Yet did not see Satan who, perched on a rail,
Secured himself there by a turn of his tail.
So, when he had delved with his primitive spade,
He carefully studied the cutting and laid
Its butt in the mud—that so lately had dried—
Then filled in the hole, stuck a label beside,
And muttered, “ That’s right ; for I’m perfectly sure—
Alluvial soil has no need of manure ;
While though I myself of sweet grapes may not eat,
They’ll furnish to grandchicks a regular treat.
And now ”—looking round to inhabited quarter—
“ I do wish they’d bring me that gourd of cool water ;—
By Cain, it is hot ! and if Satan were here
He’d feel, as I’m doing, remarkably queer !”

His Majesty smiled when he heard the remark
Of Noah (who’d dodged him so well in the ark),
And thought to himself, “ If he faints at *my heat*
Why ! what would he do if he saw but my feet ?

Oh, little he thinks,

As in sunshine he blinks,

How planting that vine will result in high jinks,
And send to my kingdom a legion of souls,
All steeped well in liquor, to grill on the coals ;

Oh, bully for me !

’Tis a red flaming spree,

For grape's ruddy vintage a trump card shall be ;
And if I don't use it to ruin mankind
May small boys excise my extension behind ! ”

Nick nodded his head and lashed round with his tail,
Of course, when he did so, he'd let go the rail ;
Then, brimming with mischief, he gave a great lurch
And, losing his balance, fell off of his perch ;

The terrible clatter

Made Noah's teeth chatter,

And caused him to bolt like a hare-pursued hatter
To little mud shanty, which, standing hard-by,
Had outbuildings round it, a cowbail and stye,
When, not even waiting to see if his family
All safely were housed, or to glance at his camel, he
Banged to the door, put the bar up and sank
Quite breathless on settle of roughly-adzed plank.
And there we will leave him, with terror near sick,
To see his pet cutting be-devilled by Nick !

“ Ho, ho ! Ha, ha ! ” laughed all liars' papa ;
“ Old Noah for valour is *not* a bright star ! ”
Then added, while rubbing the fruits of his tumble,
“ I have *my own luck*, so no reason to grumble,

The captain has left

With hoofs neatly cleft

Like my own—and indeed of my patent a theft—
His little pet lamb, and 'tis just what I need
To make two-legged lambs truly foolish indeed.”

So saying, he seized the poor beast in his paws
And cuts its carotid by means of his claws.

Then poured out its blood,

In a red gushing flood,

Round queer looking stick that was stuck in the mud ;

And vile buzzing flies—they had swiftly increased—

Arrived like foul vultures in haste to the feast :

While Satan observed, “ ’Tis a spell that will make

A lamb of the man who *one* flagon shall take.”

Then added with chuckle,

“ That *too* pleasant suckle

Will leave such an elegant taste in the throttle

That, thirsty or no, he'll go back to the bottle ;

Which means, on the highroad he quickly will be

To sultry dominions allotted to me !”

Nick, then, with the air of a festive young man,

Well met with a party of comrades, began

To pass round a bottle (imagined) from whence

He poured out a bumper—with equal pretence—

Then trolled forth a ditty, which had for its chorus—

“ We'll never know care, with big bottle before us.”

“ My care it will be,” added he with a grin,

“ To fully take charge when to drink they begin !

But time I am wasting, more blends for the vine

Are needed to crown this neat project of mine !”

In parenthesis here, I may say that, 'twas queer

Old Noah the noise of Nick's tumble should hear,

And yet not perceive him ; but such, I surmise,

Was truly the case, for with comic surprise

A monkey had paused in its tail sustained gambols
 To see Noah's garden turned into a shambles ;
 For victim was there
 With a terrible tear
 That severed its throat ; in its eyes the death stare—
 But how, or by whom was it robbed of its life ?
 Poor pug saw *no* butcher, and never a knife,
 But Jacko would see (for true monkey was he)
 Just what was the matter, so dropped from the tree,
 And cried, in his voluble simian way,
 " 'Tis certainly murder, and done in broad day.
 So now, being here, why an inquest I'll hold ! "
 He ran to the body to find he was sold :
 No time to scream ; no time to call ;
 His neck was twisted, and that was all.

Oh, twisted was head of that monkey around
 Till, like a small football, it bounced to the ground ;
 And Nick, with a kick, sent it spinning away—
A forecast of football as played to this day :
 While pugs, evolved, when fuddled will find
 That fond wives to Satan's fierce ways are inclined.
 But now I'd best tell you the cutting was fed
 With blood, to the *last drop* poor pug's veins would shed.
 That mischievous butcher he grinned in high glee,
 And swung, by his tail, to the branch of a tree ;
 Then scampered, on all fours, again and again, a
 Huge travesty strange on the small quadrumana :
 While, oh, but his songs were of flavouring queer—
Not Moody's and Sankey's the verses I fear ;

And *if* in that garden young girls had disported
They *certainly* should not with *him* have consorted !
But pulling up quickly, he said, " Be it so ;
Let mask of the monkey with *second* flask go ;
For then silly tricks
Shall result in hard kicks
And often land fools in a terrible fix."

Nick pinched his chin, he scratched his ear,
And, sotto voce, said " 'Tis clear
Of animals I must have *four*.
Hey, presto ! for a couple more."
While even as the arch-fiend spoke
A lion's roar the echoes woke,
And Leo, as they loudly rang,
On slaughtered creatures fiercely sprang ;
But, ere his tongue could lap the blood,
Himself lay slaughtered in the mud
With shattered jaws, whence crimson tide
In torrents spouted far and wide.
A horrid murder blend to wine—
The future vintage of the vine.

As lion, mad with jealous rage,
His favoured rival would engage,
So, with terrific eyes aglow,
The fiend passed swiftly to and fro ;
While foam, which gathered round his jaws,
Distilled huge flakes on breast and paws.
" What's this ?" he cried ; " will caitiff cur
Upon *my* honour cast a slur ?

You did not ? Yes, you *did*, you dog !
You *lying* son of *lying* hog !”
Then with anathema and bound
A fancied foe he struck to ground,
And roared with ever growing rage,
“ Let *that* your thirst for lies assuage !
You stop me, fools ! *Keep back*, I say !
You *won't* ! Then for your folly pay.
I'll fight you all !” Meanwhile his blows
Appeared to fall on many foes ;
But pausing, with a laugh, said he,
“ With *third flask* let brute quarrels be,
And if that charm but acts right well
There'll often be a second hell !”

“ Confound it all,” mused Nicholas,
“ I should have worked in Noah's ass ;
But no ! though he's a headstrong beast,
To human fools, in drunken feast,
He'd be a comely thing to see—
A pattern of propriety.
So, *one* more blend and potent spell
Shall souls of millions hurl to Hell,
Prepared by self-sought misery
In endless pain to dwell with me.
But, hist ! I hear the old man's sow !
She wallows in yon filthy slough,
And in that fitting place I'll slay
A beast which sought it day by day ;
Then drag her to the vine and pour
Into the earth her reeking gore ;

And who shall say the crowning rite
Befits not curse on man to light ! ”

’Twas done, and with a stifled groan
The dying sow to earth was thrown
Amidst the sickening purple mud,
Besmeared with slime and foam and blood.
“ Lie there ! ” Nick cried, “ thou beast unclean,
Fit emblem of the man obscene,
Who shall of sense by drink be reft,
Till he a human swine is left,
A swine in gutters foul to lie,
The butt for scornful tongue and eye—
A wretch with soul *already dead*.
Enough ! My spells have gaily sped :
And you, O blood baptised vine,
Shall be coadjutor of mine ! ”
Thus Satan said, but waited not
To personate a hopeless sot :
Indeed, I *more* than half suspect
His Majesty’s fine self-respect
Would not allow him e’en to ape
The thing a scavenger might scrape ;
So hied him home unto his den,
And left the dirty work to men !

’Tis long ago since, through the vine,
That curse was laid on ruddy wine ;
And mark ! no curse will ever blast
Till commonsense aside is cast ;

Then Nicholas steps in with glee
 To say, "You've done it! Come with me!"
 And he, no doubt, to sultry shop
 Has taken *some* who loved their *drop*.
 But 'twould be far too much to say
 He runs in *every* toper gay.
 True, grapes' rich juice, when ripe with age,
 The saddest heart can grief assuage;
 The invalid recruit, and give
 Old age another chance to live.
 Besides, could you be really merry
 Without your decent drop of sherry?
 Or champagne? if perchance you're able
 To have the right stuff on the table.
 Then, take your wine, I only ask—
 Don't drain, my friends, too large a flask!



SOLD.

Now, good old "Tramp," 'tis time to camp,
 And you a rest must need;
 In rock-hole near there's water clear—
 Around the best of feed!
 'Twas hereaway the blacks, they say,
 Killed Tipperary Joe—
 You're hobbled short, *in case of sport*,
 And urgent hint to go!

From fuel dry the flames leaped high—
That bushman brewed his tea ;
On damper fed, and grimly said
“ They'll soon be here for me ! ”
Then glancing round to landscape's bound,
He saw a grey smoke rise
Like whirlwind slim, and it to him
Occasioned scant surprise.

Quoth he “ My *fat*, you're after *that*,
But someone else's caul
Just gather please, your hides to grease ;
I'm certain mine's too small.”
Then, when the night shades veiled the sight
He roused a ruddy blaze,
And he and steed went off at speed
To safely camp and graze.

* * * * *

By fallen log ! is that a dog ?
A pack of dingoes ? No !
But natives, swart, who deem they've caught
An unsuspecting foe.
No red flames bright that camp now light
Where sweep the night winds cold ;
The bucks rush in, a caul to win,
But find they're nicely *sold*.



CONJUGAL CONTRARITIES.

CRAB HENPECK COMPLAINS.

Oh ! who would be a benedict ?
That is, *who would* if he
Knew only what the fates predict !
What *has* befallen me !
But fellows don't—poor fools I mean—
Who worship girls they love
As something *sweet*—half-way between
An *angel* and a dove !

An angel ? *Humph !* A gentle dove ?
A cunning crocodile !
Who simulates a trusting love
In order to beguile !
I know them well ! *I* found them out !
But then 'twas all too late,
For Clara—now so coarse and stout—
Had lured me to my fate ;

As rosebud on a dewy morn
I thought her lovely *then*—
A modest rose without a thorn
(Except for other men) ;
And, woodbine-like, her arms she'd twine
Round wooden-headed me,
Who *now*, in folds of deadly vine,
Am like a strangled tree.

Shy? gentle? clinging? What a fool
I must have been to think
A scholar in her mother's school
Could be a severed link
From Bullswool chain of impudent
And vulgar fastness. Pah!
'Tis not a common incident—
A *dove* with *kite* mamma.

My Bullswool *dove* is fierce and false,
As is her Ma, and teeth;
I only wish that I may waltz
On turf—with her beneath!
But like the old maternal cat—
Or kite—she's tough as nails,
And will, I've not the slightest doubt,
Be leaning o'er the rails

Of certain neat suburban grave,
Profusely bathed in tears
She'll shed to trap another slave
For her declining years.
And I *do* hope 'twill be that brute,
With whom she's far too thick,
For then *he'll* feast on bitter fruit
And diet her on kick!

CLARA HENPECK ADVISES HER SISTER
MARTYRS.

My wretched, contemptible husband, I find,
 Has render'd in writing his blackness of mind ;
 And, just as he warns all his friends to beware,
 I say to fair sisters, my dears, *do* take care,
 For, oh, till we're married we fancy the men
 Are here to protect, love, and kiss us, but when
 They once get the ring on—which marks us as slaves—
 We find them mean, jealous, and petulant knaves !

Now *look* at that Crab, when I first knew him *then*
 I thought him a hero ! a god amongst men !
 For, oh, how he'd wait upon poor simple me ;
 Bring choicest of bouquets and hand me my tea,
 Then humbly solicit dear Ma to allow
 His taking me off to ball, concert, or row,
 While as for the pet names he'd call me—but *there*,
 He pets me with *pretty* ones *yet*—the *old bear* !

Yes, quite to our wedding he acted the spoon,
 But when I'd *the ring on* he altered his tune ;
 For *then*, 'stead of dancing attendance on me,
 He'd always expect that in waiting I'd be ;
 And though, like the rest of long-suffering wives—
 Who waste for ungrateful cross fellows their lives—
 I tried hard to please him, in hopes of a kiss,
 I *always* succeeded in doing amiss ;

At least Crab would say so, and add with a sneer—
 “To manage a house you’re not fitted ’tis clear ;
 Ah ! *if you could do things* like Mrs. Fitts Blanks”—
 (You’ve all heard, my dears, of *her* scandalous pranks)—
 “ She thinks of her husband and keeps in her place ”—
 (*Except when—as always—she’s out with young Grace*)
 “ As excellent housewife she truly surprises ”—
 (*Yes, tradesmen with bills of all dates and all sizes*).

Just fancy such *serfdom*, dear sisters, and *then*,
 If ever you marry, *sit down on the men*.
 For husbands *will* flirt, waste their money, and blame
 Their innocent spouses for doing the same,
 Until of mean wretches we’re *heartily* sick,
 And over the traces are tempted to kick ;
 While as for myself, why the balance I strike,
 And Crab (’tis *delightful*) the lesson don’t like.



THROUGH THE KEYHOLE.

[Subject suggested by Mons. Loredan, of the first “Pinafore” Company.]

In the ancient “Quartier Latin,”
 In an attic high I dwell ;
 If you’d know my name, ’tis Etienne—
 I’m a literary swell !
 Yes ! a sou a line ’s my business,
 So I use my eyes and ears

To ingather food for laughter,
For sensation, and for tears.
Therefore, when in search of "copy,"
I perchance too often pry
Into what should *not* concern me,
With a pressman's ready eye,
'Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
As I toiling skyward go,
I just look in on my neighbours
In a friendly way, you know—
'Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
You must know !

On the first floor, as I enter,
Is the door of Monsieur B—— :
'Thro' the keyhole I am peeping,
And 'tis luxury I see ;
Flashing silver, dainty viands,
Lacqueys gliding noiselessly,
And the purse-proud banker sitting
With his napkin on his knee ;
And I ask, as thro' the keyhole,
I see partial favours heaped,
'Why *one* mortal should be pampered,
I in penury be steeped ?
'Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
There's a world of plenty. Ah !
So close, I almost touch it,
Yet from *me* it is so far—
'Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
Oh, so far

I have passed the second landing,
I am pausing at the door,
I am peeping thro' the keyhole
At the majesty of law ;
For the judge, whose word can doom men
To the guillotine, is there
The protector of chaste women—
But oh ! *Mon Dieu !* how I stare,
For his arms are round the housemaid,
And his lips to hers are pressed ;
While his gleaming eye confesses
What I see is not a jest.
Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
What a lesson meets my eye !
I can see the judge a villain,
I can note his life a lie ;
Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole—
Yes, a lie !

I am on the third floor landing,
I will pause to take a look
At another page of nature
In this interesting book ;
Ah ! a couple newly married !
How the lady yawns and sighs,
While the bridegroom to his paper,
Like a brute, devotes his eyes,
And to questions of his lady
Grunts an absent " Yes," or " No ;"
While she muses : " Would his rival—
Handsome Henri—use her so ? "

Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
There is mischief in the air ;
For love has fled, with wedlock,
From an ill-assorted pair.
And I mutter thro' the keyhole—
“ Fools ! Beware ! ”

Now another stair I've mounted—
All the *beau monde* are below ;
Still, I'll look in on the lodgers—
Just a passing peep, you know—
And what see I ? Birds in springtime ?
No ! 'tis Leon and Lisette—
He's a reckless, purse-bare student,
She a black-eyed, trim grisette ;
Crack'd each plate and cup and saucer,
Rather coarse the fare I see,
Yet love gilds the feast for Leon
And for Lisette—on his knee.
Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
A queer paradise on earth,
Rendered bright by merry laughter,
Magic wrought by youthful mirth.
Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole,
There is mirth.

No more stairs are now above me ;
At an attic door I pause—
I've not seen the widow lately,
And I ask myself the cause ?

Then I peep in thro' the keyhole,
 And a mist obscures my eye,
 For a dead child lies before me,
 With a woman kneeling by—
 A broken chair and table,
 An empty grate is there,
 While the cupboard, standing open,
 Shows its shelves all bleak and bare.
 But, ah, a rat comes stealing,
 Startled not by e'en a breath :
 The widow starts not ! *Mon Dieu !*
 Joined her child has she through death !
 Thro' the keyhole, thro' the keyhole—
 There is death !



NEURALGIA.

What ends a fellow's careless fun,
 And causes him to take the bun
 For groaning e'er the night be done ?
 Neuralgia !

What takes him from the racing path
 And stirs 'gainst quacks his boiling wrath,
 When *bills* are but his aftermath ?
 Neuralgia !

What prompts the vow that toothache's pain
Would as a change be one of gain !
Though vow and wish are all in vain ?
Neuralgia !

What hisses " Pray for death to come,
Then seek oblivion in rum,
To be with headache still more glum ? "
Neuralgia !

What threatens—" Do but dare to sneeze,
Much less to cough, by way of ease,
And with my rack I'll take fresh fees ? "
Neuralgia !

What turns his wife to shrewish jade,
And makes her pray that burglar's blade
May end his nightly ghost parade ?
Neuralgia !

I'm cursing as these lines I write
The demon that with hellish spite
Has tortured me throughout the night—
Neuralgia !



OUR TRADESPEOPLE—ESPECIALLY THE BUTCHER.

We are strangers in this city (whose Chief Magistrate is Ware),

And therefore to its tradesfolk one and all ;

But they promptly called upon us to supply our daily fare ;
While Newsey flung the daily o'er the wall.

Bright and early in the morning a stout matron in a hat—

A sort of wide umbrella done in straw—

Left cowjuice on the doorstep to amuse the neighbour's cat,
Yet waited not equivalent to draw.

The greengrocer is comely, so our cook declared that he

Was just the man we wanted, she was sure,

But found he'd married early and had got a family—

His green stuff *now* is fit but for manure.

We understood not coupons till the baker kindly sed,

“A dozen you should purchase, so to save

A little fortune weekly in expenditure on bread,”

(He hoped a path to business thus to pave).

The fat man bawling “Fat, oh,” sought a soap and candle biz,

While fisherman, with basket on his arm,

Just showed us what perfection in a *fresh* fish truly is ;

We paid, but do not wish him any harm.

Now come I to the butcher, whose cognomen queer is
Chumps,

A name on marble headstone to be graved,
Should he persist in bringing raw material in lumps
At which e'en Job, the patient, would have raved,

That is, if he as carver had attempted to divide
Such chunks with bony framework still intact,
Till drenched in perspiration, gravy-splashed, and angry-eyed,
He spouted verbal lava as he hacked.

I seldom swear at table ; but upon a catapult
I've fixed my mental optics, and will buy
A missile hurling engine and then call on Chumps to halt,
His occipital density to try

With tough unjointed section of a badly slaughtered sheep—
I do not carve with wood-axe, so 'twill be
A chain-shot class projectile that will floor him in a heap,
While jurymen at inquest must agree

That, far from being murder, it was simply butcher-cide—
Exasperating creatures we should kill ;
Then add, " You've earned our thanks, sir, so just please
to step outside,
We've clubbed our fees to treat you, and we will."



VERDANT GREEN AND THE CROW.

A STORY FOR THE BOYS.

Young Verdant Green saddled his horse at the rail.

Saddle and bridle and crupper were new,
Brand new were his breastplate and surcingle,
While Verdant himself might well pass for that, too ;
His spurs had no speck and were long in the neck,
His leggings and suit they were all above par,
But just then a crow—who appeared in the know—
Croaked mockingly, “ Ah-r-r,
You are greener than grass, so you a-r-r.”

Grown dirty, of course, when he'd saddled his horse,
He brushed off the dust from his sleeves and his boots ;
He brushed off the flies, which would cling round his eyes,
Addressing them thus—“ O, you horwible bwoots ! ”
But here a tame black ambled out with a snack—
For Verdant would meet with no public-house bar—
And waterbag (new), which seem'd dripping with dew ,
That crow, when he saw it, croaked “ A-h-r,
It will leak dry before you go f-a-r.”

To saddle's side D his new waterbag he
And luncheon secured with a stout piece of twine
He took from his pocket, then mounted grey Rocket
In order to visit an old copper mine.

VERDANT GREEN AND THE CROW.

Then somebody cried, "Take good heed where you ride,
For mulgas and myalls bad fingerposts are,
And often, indeed, green newcomers mislead."

That crow, as he took wing, croaked, "A-h-r,
These new chums are choice snacks, they a-r-r."

The weather was hot, but the flies, a large lot,
With Verdant elected to go in a cluster,
And though he objected, no chance they neglected
In all his moist cuticle's crannies to muster.
Not nearly all fun was that ride in the sun,
And Verdant Green's feelings received quite a jar
When, from a dead mulga, with air rude and vulgar,
That crow gave an insolent "A-h-r,
I'll have you my tit-bit, a-h-r."

Then somehow or other, perhaps from the bother
Our Verdant endured from that crow and those flies,
He got off the track and then could not get back,
Though cantering Rocket to rise after rise,
To see something hoping, the next moment moping
Till, ah ! he is certain he hears a sheep's ba-a ;
Then hastens to find it, and he who may mind it,
'Tis that fiend crow that greets him "A-h-r,
You are lost now, you fool, yes, you a-r-r."

That greets him with "r," and a grating "e-r"
Tacked on to the first "r," confound him.
Though Green fears the worst, and is certainly lost,
How he'd *jump* on that vile crow and pound him.

The hideous thing, like an imp on the wing,
With eye gleaming out from a setting of tar,
It *gloats* o'er his pain, and again and again
Just settles to greet him with, "A-h-r,
You are bound to be crow's meat, you a-r-r."

Now Rocket, who's not in condition to trot
And canter for ever and ever on end,
Just feels like a log, and at last will not jog,
Though drumstick-like spurs are now plied by our friend.
A terrible fix—one of Satan's own tricks—
And Verdant Green thinks how his pa and his ma
Will weep for their cherished and loved heir, who perished.
That crow, all exultant, croaks, "A-h-r,
I'll have you before your ma-m-a."

The horse at last stops, and our innocent drops
From saddle to ground by old Rocket to think ;
But think he can-not, nor one landmark can spot,
So clutches his bag just to have a *big* drink.
He'll have a big drink—he of luncheon don't think—
But, ah ! the bag's dry—as I hear deserts are —
The constant drip, dripping, has left not one sip in.
That crow, like a demon, croaks, "A-h-r,
You are ready for picking, you a-r-r."

I *wish* you would die, so I'd have by-and-bye
Your optics, and those of old Rocket's, of course ;
I dote on fresh eyes, and a *corpse* is a prize
I greatly prefer to dead bullock or horse."

But, ah, what is that? "Tis the stockrider's hat,
And stockrider under it—Oh, what a jar
Is this for the crow—and, as homeward they go,
He grinds out the ghost of his former "A-h-r—
A woebegone, gizzard-wrung, r-r r."



THE TALE OF A TERRIBLE TRAP.

AN ALLEGORY.

Come, reader, with me to Lake Torrens' border—
A labyrinth lonely—where scrub is the order
On Nature's brown face, like infectious disorder
On childhood's unfortunate cuticle.
For bush-covered sandhills run closely together,
And spines will intrude till you scarcely know whether
You won't have to take to twin garments of leather,
When prickles and mulga sticks you tickle.

The sun is declining but still brightly shining,
When, hark ! by that black oak, what can it be whining?
Or rather, what can *they* ! for I am opining
It comes from *two* singular creatures.
But just as I'm speaking a curious squeaking
Joins in, like a chorus, so let us be seeking
The gifted performers. Ah ! see, they are sneaking—
Sleek dingoes with lupuline features !

And there, on the sandy soil, sprawling quite handy,
Crawl litter of puppies, all blunt-nosed and bandy,
Around a large lizard that once was a dandy

Too festive, perhaps, for a saurian ;
But now 'tis affecting to see them dissecting
The luckless old berdna,¹ sharp scales not protecting
His inward formation from those now inspecting

It, well, by the method *Cæsarean*.

The student insists—fond brothers and sisters—
Sweet tempers are showing, as if they had blisters
On tenderest places ; for though they're not *fisters*

They worry each other delightfully ;
But maybe 'tis only a thirsting for knowledge
Which makes them so eager, in Nature's own college
To study minutely, in this their dog's doll age,

The creature they fight for so spitefully.

But, ah ! there's another not happy—the mother—
Who glares at her hubby as if she could smother
Or wipe him out quickly by some means or other ;

What *has* he been doing, I wonder ?
From queer glances flying, not what they are saying,
I'm pretty well certain he well deserves flaying ;
And no doubt from virtue's strict path some vile straying
Has married love managed to sunder.

Some ladies, I fancy, are causelessly jealous,
But not so this female ; for Frisk is too zealous
In sylvan seclusion—his conscience grown callous—
To get in once more her good graces.

1. Berdna—Iguana.

Through pond he wants dragging, for see how he's wagging
His fine furry brush while she's shrewishly nagging :
He won't even hint that she well deserves gagging ;
Yes, guilt in his rascally face is !

Yet though we should clout him, there's something about
him

A deal to his credit, howe'er we misdoubt him—
His equable temper ! Why, nothing will flout him,
Or make him less jaunty and festive ;
But, ah ! he is going—that *lava* eye flowing
Has made things too sultry—and now there's no knowing
What Frisky intends, but of wild oats the sowing
His actions are *more* than suggestive.

Lupe, dropping her tail and her bristles together,
To litter retreats in great doubt as to whether
Her Frisky may ever return to his tether—
She *may* have been *just* a bit hasty !
But all about buppa¹—though anxious to drown them—
We'll leave with the longing that some one may crown
them
With martyrdom gory e'er summer can brown them.
How Chang would enjoy them in pasty !

As damp are the sandhills from late fallen shower
Our dingo is shunning each rain-laden bower,
Because—quite per contra to buttercup's flower—
He thinks a dry coat the most dandy ;

1. All the puppies, buppa meaning the young of anything.

So, mischief in view, he is merrily tripping
Where pearls of pure water lend each leaf a tipping.
Just musing on lambkins, which ought to be skipping
Round crabholes—for playgrounds so handy.

But never a lambkin is there about playing,
Or tasty marsupial Frisk may be slaying ;
No staggering calf, no old nanny-goat straying
To furnish a dingo with dinner ;
But little *he's* thinking of eating or drinking—
Such pleasures, at best, are but equal to rinking—
Oh, *there's* something *rather* more tempting I'm thinking :
And Frisky *does* smile—the old sinner.

By newly-built fence a young slut's eyes are shining
Above parted mouth, most delightfully whining—
At least to our masculine dingo's opining,
And he is a judge of ability.
Two velvety ears—that are flirting too knowingly—
And lithe slender body, which bends about flowingly,
Compels Master Frisky to wiggle most wooingly
And caper to show his agility.

But here I declare that with sorrow and sadness
I view the false Frisky's expressions of gladness—
His *sposa* at home ! Why it really is badness
Quite counter to honour's commanding.
But ears when not hearing and eyes when not seeing
Are never offended ; and so in his spreeing
With sophistry's maxims is always agreeing—
Our rascal *too well* understanding.

His wicked old nose to the nose of the stranger
Frisk lovingly thrusts, not imaging danger
Is lurking behind him now—thanks to Joe Grainger—

His tail marks dread peril's diameter :
A terrible trap with a newly filed trigger
And powerful jaws, which would hold a wild nigger
Or leave him, at best, but a lame-legg'd figure—

What Mr. Muldoon calls a lameter !

An impudent leer Frisky gives and a wriggle,
To which the young lady replies with a giggle ;
Thus causing our sad dog his thick brush to wiggle—

A motion in prudence most wanting.
For just where it popp'd on the smooth sand delusive
A trigger is sprung—an event not conducive
To poor dingo's fun—and an ending conclusive
Is put to his gay galavanting.

With sharp yells resounding, whose echoes rebounding
The parrots dislodge from dark mulgas surrounding,
Frisk worries the *bete noir* his tail now impounding,
And even would bite fair Delilah.

But, oh, the sharp snap the vile trap made when closing,
So shattered her nerves that they now need composing ;
And, see ! a dim vista is rapidly closing

On temptress—for so we may style her.

Oh ! why had Frisk's thoughts from his own Lupulina
E'er wandered a moment ? Ah ! would that he'd been a
Sad exile, like Nap, on the lone St. Helena,
So he were well out of this trouble.

But, then, though a long one, his tail is a strong one ;:
And, oh, its detainer is really the wrong one
To part from a victim, whatever the wrong done—
And so there's an end to the bubble

Of heart-cheering hope that deludes e'en while flattering,
For fate, deaf to prayer or blue adjective scattering,
Is down upon Frisky, in spite of the smattering
He has of cho ce terms of invective.

So, howling and springing, or on the ground flinging,
His sand bespoiled body does nought towards bringing
His *out-back* extension from gin to its clinging—
He'll soon be a shingle defective !

Frisk tries to bolt off but his tail gives due warning
Of tethers length reached, which he cannot be scorning—
Oh ! nought can he now do by scheming or fawning,
For he is in grip inexorable.

He raves and he swears in a dingo's wild fashion
When freezing with fright or o'erboiling with passion.
His captor is steel *sans* all fear or compassion—
His plight it is simply deplorable.

But, ah ! there's a beaming of comfort still gleaming
Not hopeless his case—as it looked at first seeming—
And Frisk *may* escape yet by means of some scheming—

The trap *has green hide for a tether* !
And then, though his musical-box may be bleeding,
His teeth are in order for biting and feeding,
And now gnaw a spring which, by slipping, is leading
Directly to makings of leather.

But how long would leather and hide put together
Resist Frisky's grinders? And now he thinks whether
He will or he will not expose to the weather

His quarters—like fox in the fable !

But soon his fierce snapping results in deep gapping,
And severs completely the hide's double lapping ;
When, gaining his freedom—at least from the strapping—
He once more for running is able.

Like freshly slipped greyhound our Frisky is bounding,
Pursued by the trap, with an uproar resounding ;
Their speed from the jump-off is truly astounding

All records *for time* they are breaking.

Don't talk of a cur with an ending in kettle ;—
One ne'er ran before with a tithe of Frisk's mettle,
For he, in addition to hardest of fettle,
Has glutton the pace to be making !

A runaway train down steep incline careering,
Or zebra, fierce lion's loud roar after hearing,
Might travel, but not as friend Frisky is clearing—

Or *trying* to clear—from the evil

Persuader behind ; for how scrubby no matter
May sandhill or plain be, he runs like a hatter,
The trap bounding after with soul-scaring clatter ;
“ Eclipse ” he'd eclipse on the level.

By sad chance, indeed, not of fugitives seeking,
A bee-line Frisk makes for his puppies all squeaking,
Where wife of his bosom—too sulky for speaking—
Is restlessly strolling quite near 'em.

Like horrible chain-shot in startled air flashing,
Or broadside of brickbats through bow windows crashing,
The engine and Frisk of five puppies make a hashing,
Ere Lupe from their onslaught could clear 'em.

A loss, by-the-bye, man ! for no mutton-pie man
Is there to convert them to pies in his high can ;
Or sausage—the primest of German—by sly plan ;
Frisk now is *not* careful of trifles !
Lupe gives him one glance full of anger and sorrow,
Then thinks on the wiggling he'll wince at to-morrow,
While wondering wherefor that thing he should borrow—
They've vanish'd like bullets from rifles.

Now mile after mile, and still going like winking,
Frisk makes all the running to stall off the clinking
Opponent of steel, while he's constantly thinking
It owes to old Nick its paternity.
But never will Frisky that dead-sticker shake off,
Or, after re-weighing, the extra weight take off ;
He cannot pull up, from the course he can't make off—
He's handicapp'd now for eternity.

MORAL.

Now, benedicts all, when you leave your fond spouses
Don't visit queer friends in their shady town houses,
And where—in the vulgar tongue—often such rows is,
Or trouble you'll suffer 'tis certain !

And do not go leering at servant girls pretty,
Whatever their names be—Jane, Martha, or Kitty ;
Unless you would find, when you're home from the city,
 Hot coffee and lectures called curtain !

So gentlemen all, from my story take warning
And do not its fine moral lesson be scorning,
Or sooner or later you'll understand *pawning*
 And emulate "Old Mother Hubbard."
For though Frisky's friend did so suddenly vanish,
You *might* get entangled with *some hard to banish*,
Who'd cling with persistence you'd find far too clannish,
 And skeletons leave in your cupboard.

Then think, too, of time when your dim earthly taper
Is blown out by death, and on Styx bank you vapour—
I mean your vexed shade—and with many a caper
 Try hard to gain Charon's attention !
While he, poleing on, with his craft leaking badly—
Which, sinking or no, you would occupy gladly—
Will leave you behind him to think over sadly
 Those sins which I scarcely need mention.

And you, married ladies—to men so superior—
Don't make for dear husbands *too hot* the interior
Of cottage or mansion, if *once* they are beery, or
 Glance at the fair who so try men.
For though even temper'd they are at first starting
And love you sincerely, continual smarting
From lingual caustic often ends in the parting
 Of bonds—both of love and of hymen !

And readers, remember, each pater and mater
 Such misgoverned doings will, sooner or later,
 Incite to like conduct the cubs in your crater—

 Your children, who share your society.
 For infantile minds are as wax for receiving,
 And steel for retaining, impressions, which cleaving
 Through all after life may result in deceiving
 Their owners *re* perfect propriety.



SONG OF THE FAR NORTH MAIL.

AFTER HOOD.

With action weary and spent,
 With eyeballs sunken and dull,
 Four shambling, ghostlike horses strive
 A lumbering coach to pull.
 Drag ! drag ! drag !
 In terrible scorching clime,
 Oh ! fain would stop each poor struggling nag
 For hasty bite from a feeding bag
 And moment's breathing time.

 Drag ! drag ! drag !
 'Midst sweltering, shadeless bush ;
 And drag ! drag ! drag !
 While *fares* behind must push.

'Twere better in a cart—
To ride with the knacker's man—
Where horses have ever to take a part
When past cab, coach, or van !

Drag ! drag ! drag !
Though long their strength has failed.
Drag ! drag ! drag !
By merciless whip-thong wealed.
Plain and sideling and creek,
Creek and sideling and plain,
And over the gutters they stagger weak,
The end of the stage to gain.

Oh ! mail with letters fraught !
Oh ! mail that hurries and drives !
No senseless leather you're wearing out,
But hapless creatures' lives.
Drag ! drag ! drag !
In suffering, hunger, and grime ;
Away up here in the dreary North
Horse-killing is no crime !

Oh ! death would be glad escape
To suffering frames of bone,
Which crawling on, in skeleton shape,
Would melt a heart of stone—
Would melt a heart of stone
To think of the pain they know.
Oh ! shame that horses thus should starve,
Though far from mead or mow.

Drag ! drag ! drag !
The whipcord never flags
While a man for wages still will ply
The scourge on those wretched nags.
A hayless yard and a barren plain—
Starvation everywhere—
From well alone can they get their fill,
And *oftentimes* not there.

Drag ! drag ! drag !
A weary stage and long.
Drag ! drag ! drag !
Urged on by ruthless thong,
Creek and sideling and plain,
Plain and sideling and creek,
Till staggering gait and drooping head
Of sheer prostration speak.

Drag ! drag ! drag !
With the noonday sun too bright,
And drag ! drag ! drag !
Through suffocating night.
Till Larry falls asleep,
To wake with a sudden start,
As *they* soon know by the whip's sharp crack
And "long oats" burning smart.

Oh ! for a hearty feed
Of lucerne or hay so sweet,
Or e'en the town nag's bed
Down-trodden 'neath his feet—

For only one short week,
In rural rude brush shed,
With portly cow and the plough nag sleek,
Where once, perchance, they fed.

Oh ! for a respite brief
From galling collar and whip,
From sweat-soaked trace and bit and rein,
And dusty toilsome trip ;
A little feeding would give them heart—
But pity nought avails :
There is no feed for those starving steeds,*
Gaunt slaves of Her Majesty's mails.

With action weary and spent,
With eyeballs sunken and dull,
Four shambling, ghost-like horses strive
A lumbering coach to pull.
Drag ! drag ! drag !
In terrible scorching clime.
Oh ! fain would stop each poor struggling nag
For hasty bite from a feeding bag,
And moment's breathing time !

* NOTE.—These verses were written in 1878, when the horses *running* the Blinman mail had to subsist on what they could pick up on country where *sheep were starving*, the consequence oftentimes being that animals starting on a stage had to be turned out to die before the next changing place would be reached. The whole business was characterised by horrible brutality, as the whip had to be constantly kept going to get even a walk or jog out of the wretched beasts. The verses appeared in *The Register* newspaper, and were the means of calling the attention of the authorities to the matter—much to the horses' advantage.—R.B.

AVERNUS IN AN ATTIC.

The day had been a record one ;
And all within the city
Admitted they were overdone
Through baking in the burning sun ;
Sweat drench'd were they and gritty.

And now in tarry-smelling street
They wearily did wander ;
Perchance hot maidens fair to meet,
Or hot acquaintances to treat,
Where "cits" their money squander.

I pryed not into their affairs,
But entered certain portals ;
Then, mounting darksome grimy stairs,
Unknowing "Burford,"* much less "Pears,"
I interviewed queer mortals.

In shadow-haunted barn-like room,
Where printers' ghosts might revel,
And where, amidst the midnight gloom,
When foreman did for copy fume,
Had flitted Printer's Devil.

* "Burford," the S.A. "Pears," the fragrance of whose factory is a scent of beauty and a joy for ever.

But now, in linotyping days,
 With type-pots pewter melting,
 Three Jobbers stood beside their trays—
 All faintly seen 'neath gas-jet rays—
 Devoid of trews or belting.

For, furnace-like, that attic's heat
 Near held those comps in fusion :
 And though they garbed were to their feet,
 I nearly beat a swift retreat
 In virgin-like confusion.

Their dress was strictly decolette—
 An apron hung before, sir,
 With one behind—which seemed to me
 From savage state scarce one degree—
 I would not be unkind, sir.

Yet I remarked to apron'd man,
 "Your suit is truly breezy,
 And fitted for the frying-pan,
 Will fizzle soul of erring man,
 For here you seem quite easy."

That comp remarked, "This is not hell,
 Though, should you stay one minute,
 You'll conjure up a brimstone smell,
 With demon forms your fears to swell,
 Until you'll swear you're in it."

I did not wait a moment ! No !
But to the street returning,
Had cooling B. and soda go ;
Then mused upon the fires below
Which are for ever burning.

LATER.

Next morning in that grimy floor
Those comps were soaked for evermore.
Yes ! there they lay in perfect peace—
Six aprons and three spots of grease !



THE LIFE OF THE LIVERY HORSE.

I once was a frolicsome foal,
Presumably sleek as a mole,
But age, as with men,
Brought its troubles and then
I did not fare well on the whole.

No ! during a drought I near died,
And poverty speckled my hide ;
Then, once broken in,
Rough, girth-gall'd, and thin,
They call'd me a duffer to ride !

The consequence was I next found
Myself for Metropolis bound,
 Curtailed to a cob
 In a weedy cull mob ;
Then sold in the ring for a pound.

On cab-stand I stood for a while
To earn cabby sixpence per mile,
 But did not grow fat
 On the proceeds, for that
Is not quite a cab horse's style.

I pass'd on to Letting-out man,
And then 'twas I really began
 To know what toil meant,
 When long journeys I went
As only a hired horse can.

I might have been fairly well fed—
Have often turned litter for bed—
 But when on the road
 With a "larrikin" load,
I'd reason to wish myself dead ;

They'd paid their half quid for the day
And meant their blank oath to be gay,
 So I was kept going
 With sweat ever flowing
En route for the Hills or the Bay ;

At pub troughs they'd stop me to drink—
Each seeming for liquor a sink—
And then every bloke
On the road with a moke
They'd pass, as they'd say, "in a wink."

With nostrils distended and set,
With turned hair all salt-grime and sweat,
I'd stagger at night
In deplorable plight,
Brief respite from torture to get !

What wonder then is it my knees
O'er hang by say forty degrees ;
The windgalls below
As I painfully go
To Minchin* for permanent ease.

*The Curator of the Adelaide Zoo.



LOVE IN A CHURCH.

A WELSH STORY FOUNDED ON HARD FACT.

One summer's morning, piously intent,
To Ruthlin Church the Circuit Judges went—

A proper precedent to show, and leaven
Forensic lore with that which leads to heaven ;
And this, with psalmody and fervid prayer,
The pro. tem. parson deftly sandwiched there,
While Legal Limbs a pathway to the skies
Devoutly traced with roof-tree searching eyes ;
But *were* their thoughts in unison ? Who cares ?
The " Devil's Own " may dodge the devil's snares :
So let them listen, or in slumber lurch—
My theme is love, conceived and urged in Church.

A tourist gay, who, prodigal of money,
The verger tips well, sits this morning sunny
To mark, to learn, and inwardly digest
The points of doctrine fervently expressed
By pious clergyman in surplice white,
Who oft before has guided souls aright ;
But now I fear his periods will fall
On stranger's ears, yet not his thoughts enthrall,
For summer nymph—white muslin robed and bright—
In pew adjacent captivates his sight.
In tumult wild his pulses all are toss'd ;
He looks ! he sighs ! all else to him is lost ;
By Hymen tied, right soon that maiden fair
Shall fondly love him and enjoy his care ;
His arms alone shall clasp that taper waist,
No lips save his her honeyed kisses taste—
Of course, excepting hug and kiss paternal ;
Of female relatives, and calm fraternal.
A sweet monopoly, for sure is he
By sighing swain unclasp'd, unkiss'd, is she.

But, oh, my brethren, we too have been
In love—as he is—and perhaps as green !

Yes, archer small has winged a cunning shaft
That, freshly feathered, now impales the heart
Of scented swell—in latest thing by Poole—
Who looks, perhaps, but is not quite a fool.
To goddess fair impetuous he'd fly,
Be blest for ever or, rejected, die.
He checks the impulse for, on shining wings,
Kind inspiration comfort to him brings.
Oh, happy thought ! By Jupiter, 'twill do !
His costly Bible opens to his view—
Its rustling pages flutter 'neath his hand—
His scheme, dear reader, you shall understand.
“ The very thing ! ” Verse five he lights upon
Of second letter of Apostle John :

*“ And I thy servant do beseech thee, Miss—
No new commandment, I maintain, is this—
For from the first it was ordained that we
Should love each other, that is, you and me ! ”*
With marking pin the passage he impales,
Then hands the volume o'er the polished rails
To pride of Cambria—of course the maid—
Who takes it from him, with expression staid ;
While much she wonders, till with woman's wit
For problem strange she finds solution fit.
Then, quite resolving that the ardent youth
Is *rich* and handsome, seeks the Book of Ruth,

Verse tenth, chap. second, which sustains the case,
As instanc'd here : "*She, falling on her face,*
To Boaz said," *with no mock modest sound,*
" Why in thine eyes have I such favour found,
And I a stranger ?" Here the book again
She gives to that infatuated swain,
While conscious glances, stealing from her eyes,
Shame softest sunshine from sweet summer skies,
Which makes him feel—— *How ?* I can scarcely tell,
Though youthful lovers know the feeling well.
For, oh, he finds sensations round his heart
Of keenest pleasure—yet with painful smart.
And now, he murmurs, "She is mine, indeed ;"
Yet seeks the third and last of John with speed,
Which, having found, he gives to maiden's view ;
And here its paraphrase I hand to you :
" To thee so many things I have to write
That don't you think, love, we should meet to-night,
Or after service, so that, face to face,
I then can urge—and you can hear—my case ?"
She reads the verse, returning him a look,
While still in pawn she keeps that useful book—
A happy omen in her lover's eyes,
For Paradise is seen through cloudless skies.
Not lovely only is the fair, but kind ;
Then farewell fear, let rapture flood his mind.

The sheriff nods, the judges rappee take,
And cough and sneeze to keep themselves awake ;
While wakeful wives oft nudge their heavy spouses,
Who, dosing off, would warble through their noses.

On vagrant butterfly the children's eyes
Are keenly fixed, as overhead it flies
To hunt for honey in deceitful flowers
That nothing owe to sunshine or to showers,
But flits at last through window to the fields,
While glibly still his tongue the parson wields ;
For earnestly, yet all devoid of cant,
He strongly urges, though he does not rant ;
Brings light of reference from writ divine
On sermon's subject to intensely shine ;
His words out-gushing in a saintly flow,
Till hungry magistrates impatient grow
For tasty luncheon—*cooked the day before*
Lest *his dark Majesty* a point might score.
“ Lastly, my brethren ! ” to this a sigh
Of soft relief makes eloquent reply :
Soul-saving sermons satisfy the *mind*,
But Nature's cravings still a salve must find !

At lovely maid our hero steals a glance,
And meets—oh, rapture—hers by *merest* chance.
’Tis quick averted, while each pearl-shell ear
And swan-like neck in “ blush rose ” hues appear ;
Thesé, like the tints on springtide landscape bright,
Lend added charms, and crown the swain's delight.

With gentle bang the parson shuts the book ;
His sermon closes, and with fervid look
Implores a blessing on his flock, who now
Their lowered heads in solemn worship bow,

That is, they're buttoning their gloves and tying
Young hopefuls' hats, who, near with hunger dying,
Are all impatient from their seats to go,
As is the lady and her handsome beau—
At least the beau is, though I fear I err
About the belle ; too well bred she by far
To wish the moments fleeter than before,
Or one step near Ruthlin's old church door.

The blessing said, with loud resounding swell
The organ's tones the sacred building fill,
While crowded audience, with decent pace,
Pervade the aisles and slowly leave the place.
The plebs move first and from the portals go—
To leave their seats their betters are more slow—
They wait till aisles from concourse shall be free,
Then issue forth to sail majestically
Through shady porch to where a dapper page
Or footman stands by stylish equipage ;
They take their places and, with conscious pride,
To mansion old or modern villa ride.

Now, gentle reader, you expect I'll tell
Of meeting transports of our beau and belle,
But there you err ; some other bard may sing
Of wedding breakfast, and that sort of thing.
One crumb of comfort only I can fling—
He paid the jeweller, she wore the ring !



THE LIFE OF A WORKING BULLOCK.

A pretty young bull calf, red spotted, and sleek,
Is sporting with other calves small,
Which merrily race by a shady gum creek,
Unheeding each cow's loving call.
They flourish their tails in the ambient air,
They battle each other in sport ;
For little they're thinking of trouble or care,
Or anything else of the sort.

But lurking hard fortune is near as they play,
For stockkeeper, stockwhip in hand,
On cunning old stockhorse soon drives them away
To suffer by knife and by brand.
For 'tis to the station-yard now they all go—
By more they are joined on the way—
And echoes are ringing to whip crack and low,
This general mustering day.

Our careless young calf—as rude lesson in life—
Discovers the nature of pain,
For cruel thongs cut through his skin like a knife—
When weary he lags on the plain.
He hastens his pace with a dolorous bleat—
He learns that he should not delay ;
That loitering business he will not repeat.
But keep up the rest of the way.

Now shut in a pen are the calves from the cows,
Which to them incessantly low,
While red flames are leaping from crooked gum boughs
Round brands that are soon at red glow.
Past ponderous post runs a lariat small,
With noose on the innermost end—
This, active young bushmen are waiting to haul,
And Branders' sharp call to attend.

Now loose loop is hanging from far-reaching stick—
Our calf he is noosed by the neck,
And impotent all is each struggle and kick
The tide of his troubles to check.
Enraged and astonished he bellows aloud,
His tail is in torturing hands ;
Hauled in is the rope by that cynical crowd,
And he a close prisoner stands.

Then leg-rope on hind foot they speedily cast
And strain it to topmost yard rail ;
In similar fashion a fore they make fast,
Then drag him to ground by the tail.
Now held is his head 'neath a stockkeeper's knee,
While overseer—not at all tender—
Leans over his flank, and our calf soon will be
A case of non-mischievous gender.

And now on his hide with a red hissing brand
A cypher or number they sear ;
Then angle or curve by unfaltering hand
Is cut from a quivering ear.

His eyes and his nostrils with filthy dust fill,
His coat it hath many a smear ;
Cast loose are his fetters by Harry or Bill,
And he starts on the life of a steer.

While time for our bullock has hurried away,
His life of the freest has been,
For camped in cool creeks he has passed each hot day—
Has fed 'neath the bonny star's sheen.
His horns are wide spread, with a threatening curve
His limbs they are brawny and strong,
And one day his owner is heard to observe—
“ I'll rope that big steer before long ? ”

Our sturdy, wild steer in a yard strong and high
Now circles like lion in cage,
And tosses his head at his enemies nigh,
While pawing up dust in his rage.
But soon some old cynical slaves of the yoke
Are turned in—as shelter designed—
The motions of man with the lasso to cloak,
And safety from danger to find.

By noose, round his great horns, he's lassoed again—
He bellows and plunges around ;
This only increases his trouble and pain—
Each strand of that rope it is sound.
Like deep-rooted rock he then stubbornly stands,
His lolling tongue swollen and white ;
The lariat strains from strong, pitiless hands—
'Tis passive resistance—not fight.

But, given his head, he is bounding once more ;

The roping-stick goads him, and then
The rocky brown hilltops re-echo his roar.

This means but a laugh for the men,
Who, hauling the lariat hand over hand—

As quick as he gallops almost—
That blustering bullock is brought to a stand
With his head drawn tight to a post.

Then surly old worker—huge, cunning, and strong—

Stands closely the captive beside,
And short swivel chain by a newly-cut thong
To base of the steer's horns is tied ;
Connected 'tis then to long-suffering neck
Of "Ranger," with pliable rope ;
And henceforth the peace of our friend is a wreck,
And he a dumb slave without hope.

His burly big bondsmate he rushes around—

Such vagaries will not be borne—
He'll presently find each obstreperous bound
Will meet with a punishing horn ;
And soon the old giant will lead him away,
And wear him down into submission :
With many wild brothers he's had his own way
And brought them to servile condition.

Our bullock now slaves with the road-weary team—

He rests not in terrible heat ;
No meadow for him by a murmuring stream,
No portion save dust and sore feet.

And should the wheels sink deep in treacherous sands
He suffers a world of abuse,
For heavy thong falls from unmerciful hands,
Too perfectly trained in its use.

And so he toils on ; to new masters is sold,
But never by change does he gain ;
No pity he finds, when starved, feeble, and old—
No respite from whip-thong or chain.
But now on a burning hot midsummer day
The torturing scourge it may fall ;
He heeds it no more, for he falls by the way
And casts off for ever his thrall.

In sweltering pass, where the wretched beast died,
There lieth a festering heap,
Where skeleton gleams from malodorous hide,
And beetles—the loathliest—creep.
The lithe lizard lurks 'neath his cavernous flank,
In wait for its sun-loving prey ;
While clustering weeds—that scarce hide him—are
rank,
For they fatten on his decay.



LOST.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

On lonely bushland, silent, parched and brown,
A burning flood the torrid sun pours down

From brazen sky, where floats no fleecy speck
Of kindly cloud the solar rays to check—
Fierce brilliant rays of searching heat and light,
Which fry the landscape and afflict the sight,
Till gasping earth and drooping sapless leaf,
From thirst protracted, vainly seek relief.

But, ah, before us is a lovely scene—
Where trees umbrageous form a sylvan screen
To shining waters of pellucid lake,
Whose sleeping wavelets no rude winds may wake ;
While, backing all in semi-circle high,
Cliffs grandly rise to kiss the glowing sky—
A vision fair to fascinate the sight
And fill the weary with a strange delight.

Like childhood's fairyland that bright illusion
Excites the fancy but defies intrusion ;
For hasten to it and 'twill swiftly fade,
Then, lost in air, the curious evade,
While distant mountains in its stead appear,
Whose lofty summits pierce the sunlight clear ;
And trees, adjacent, which, dejected, stand
Like mourning mutes in life-deserted land.

At range's foot extends an arid plain,
Inured to drought and hopeless now of rain,
Whose waste-scourged surface of all herbage bare
Has leafless saltbush dotted here and there.

While seeming* smoke ascending all around,
With fires imagined, marks the circle's bound—
A place it is by savage nature cursed
With many a duststorm and enduring thirst.

Deep silence reigns like that of desert grave,
For zephyrs sleep and leaves forget to wave,
Though stalking whirlwinds, slender, grey and high,
Like pillared smoke-wreaths seek to scale the sky.
No bushland denizen relieves the sight,
Save soaring eagle in majestic flight,
Which watchful wheels in upper fields of air—
A dusky speck 'midst universal glare.

For thirst-urged animals have gone to seek
Refreshing streamlet in umbrageous creek—
To ruminate and fight the flies until
The sinking sun shall touch a western hill.
But, ah, a fugitive invades the scene,
With hurried step and agitated mien,
Who, speeding onward, with suspicion peers
As if fierce foes around his path he fears.

For panic driven has been heart and brain
Since speedy rumour told of comrade slain
By ruthless savages, whose thirst for gore
Would send fresh victims to the Silent Shore.

* On such a day as I describe one often can fancy that fires are burning all round, while small objects, say sheep, loom up like camels, and I have often mistaken them for those animals.—R. B.

Himself the first ! That fate he must evade,
No matter how, or by what trust betrayed ;
And so we see him, like a hunted deer,
For safety fleeing to a station near.

But soon he stops—flings troubled glances round—
Then, stung by terror, scans the dusty ground ;
For now *two* tracks his puzzled sight confuse,
Each plainly marked, yet which is he to choose ?
Ah ! which, indeed ? But there is none to say
While abject panic will not brook delay.
On safety's path in doubting mood he strides,
Then turns, in haste—'tis fate for him decides !

For as the *lost* with little thought will do,
He treads the pathway plainest to the view ;
But danger fraught—like broad enticing one
Down which the reckless to destruction run—
For chosen track leads outward to the plain
Where water is not, save when welcome rain
A muddy store to surface pools supplies,
Which summer's sun in scorching mood soon dries.

And now, though fearful lest his footsteps stray,
The luckless fugitive pursues his way ;
While dread uncertainty and solar beams
Wring blinding sweat from him in briny streams ;
But heedless all of ev'ry minor pain,
He looks for succour on that hopeless plain
Till *even flies* must yield the palm to *fright*
Which dulls the senses and distracts the sight.

The path grows fainter ; branching paths again
Diverging from it intersect the plain,
Till even he, whose commonsense seems flown,
The dusty track a cattle pad must own.
So turns in haste, but soon the track is left
For waste of stones, and shrubs of leaves bereft—
A brown expanse of desolation wild
O'er which he runs like terror-stricken child.

What, though the hills which fence the landscape round
With landmarks bold, all widely known, abound,
Which now would guide him to life-saving track,
He heeds them not, but hurries swiftly back ;
Unnumbered fears within his breast combine,
And Fate, relentless, all his steps incline.
He, seeing, sees not, has no power to think—
Save of fresh fears and mad desire to drink !

To *drink* ! but, ah, his canteen left behind—
Where, on that plain, shall he a clear pool find ?
Where shall he run ? Where strain his aching sight
In stifling heat, and all too brilliant light ?
Where ? Where, indeed ? For save in winding creek,
'Midst western hills, need he for water seek ;
But kindly hills may beckon him in vain,
Who never more shall visit them again !

O ye who dwell in England's favoured land,
With wealth of water constantly at hand,
When from a fountain did ye drink with pleasure,
And truly know the value of the treasure ?

'Tis always so with blessings cheaply bought,
For on *their* worth men rarely waste a thought ;
But let them lose one, be it ne'er so small,
'Tis craved for *then*—pursued and prized by all.

No longing now has agitated man
For purchased pleasures from the frothing can.
Ah, no, indeed ! 'Tis o'er the verdant brink
Of stream pellucid he would stoop to drink,
Till banished thirst allowed his thoughts to stray
To potent draught in township far away.
For though of *wine* gay social bards may sing,
The *truly thirsty* long for limpid spring.

To aggravate the wanderer's despair
A rush of pinions agitates the air ;
Then, close before him, on a dead bush lights
A fiend-like crow, that in his woe delights ;
And prophecies, with croak and gleaming eyes,
That he—the lost one—soon will be a prize
To crows exultant, which on eager wing
Will dogs and eagles to the banquet bring.

That evil thing will haunt him to the last,
Despite the stones and curses at it cast,
And gaily gloat, with pantomime and jeer,
O'er human waif's ungovernable fear.
While, darting down from dreadful orb of day,
Flames, as from furnaces, upon him play.
No gleam of hope his tortured heart may cheer ;
It finds a hell beyond endurance here.

By lofty rocks—the wallabies' abode—
He gains once more the lonely, sylvan road ;
Again to leave it for the fatal plain,
Replete (for him) with misery and pain.
In senseless haste he runs the fatal round,
Till sinks the sun, with golden glories crowned ;
And with his train of wide divergent light
Gives Western Day and leaves the plain to night.

In breathless terror, crouching on the ground,
The lost one listens for each bushland sound—
The great cicada shrieking in the trees,
And wild dog's howl that mocks the sighing breeze,
While Oolka boorachie¹, devoid of fear,
Bring added terrors when approaching near ;
Till scared themselves, by great, round gleaming eyes
Of hungry night-hawks, bent on furry prize.

For luckless lost one night no more retains
The power to cheer or soothe his burning pains.
No shining orb attracts his burning eyes ;
They search for morning in the lower skies,
While welling tears from long forgotten source
Down fevered cheeks pursue their silent course.
But worn-out wanderer no more may keep
That fearful vigil, and he falls asleep.

Sleep? Yes! 'tis sleep! but slumber of the kind
That seals the eyelids, yet permits the mind
To be invaded by malignant host,
Which swarm to conquest from strange dreamland's coast :

1. Oolka boorachie—Kangaroo rats.

A goblin gang of varied terrors they
'Midst shades nocturnal hold their evil sway,
To pile on gourmands suffocating loads,
While spectres prowl in starving Want's abodes.

In savage guise the visitants appear
To wretched man who sleeps unhappy there ;
For huge, swart warriors, in warpaint rage
Round lonely hut—to him a fatal cage ;
In lust of blood they shake their jagged spears,
While horrid yells assail his startled ears ;
Till, bounding forth, a demon from the band
To thatch inflammable applies a brand.

Up springs the blaze and soon, with whirlwind roar,
Red leaping flames toward the heavens soar ;
And he by torture infinite must die.
“ Oh, God ! have mercy ! ” is his anguished cry.
But now, too great his agony, it breaks
Dread nightmare's spell. The sufferer awakes
To grim reality 'neath midnight sky ;
Consumed by thirst—no friend or water nigh !

He sleeps no more, but strains his aching sight
For creeping rays that herald morning's light.
Oh, would that day, so longed for, e'er be born
To cheer his heart by mental anguish torn ?
Those weary hours seem lengthened into years,
Each closely crowded by a lifetime's fears ;
Oh, surely, Time with folded pinions stays
His onward flight, and cheerful dawn delays.

Those dreadful hours of darkness flee at last,
And night's black mantle from the scene is cast.
In glaring light too soon again 'tis dressed,
Yet comfort comes not to the lost one's breast ;
He swiftly starts with advent of the dawn
Like hunted animal, on way forlorn.
Ah ! whither bent ? 'Tis to no haunt of man,
But to that fate which yesterday began.

For now, once more upon that desert plain,
He bends his steps in hopelessness and pain ;
While, all chaotic, to his frenzied gaze
The landscape whirls in strange distempered haze.
He laughs aloud, he clasps his burning palms,
And in wild ecstasy waves high his arms ;
For madness comes in friendly guise to share
The awful torments no sane man might bear.

The sun, implacable, from cloudless path
Shoots burning arrows with unbounded wrath,
Till heated rocks fling back a sullen glare
And mirage vapours mockingly in air.
Yet, mutely still to searching fires a prey,
The tortured fugitive pursues his way
With dragging footsteps, in erratic lines,
For to no path his course he now confines.

From God's poor image, fainting and forlorn,
His scanty coverings are slowly torn
By trembling hands which heed not what they do,
As on the bushes they the garments strew,

Till naught remains ; yet still he feebly strays
To nudely bear the dreadful solar rays,
While, furnace like, its raging flames inpent,
With horrid heat his vital chords are rent.

O'er dreary Torrens' wild and silent shore*
The sun descends in cloudless glare once more.
Then staggers down that human wreck to die,
Unseen by all save Omnipotent Eye.
Fear dwells no more in his demented brain ;
From him has passed for ever earthly pain ;
No dread hath he of fearsome sight or sound,
He swooning lies on heated desert ground.

The solemn Night assumes her silent sway,
And starry hosts in numberless array
March slowly past, when Death, with kindly call,
That fainting spirit liberates from thrall,
And bids it seek elsewhere a hidden fate
Of pain eternal, or seraphic state,
As *He* shall judge—who judgeth all things well.
May *He* have mercy. Wanderer, farewell !

* LAKE TORRENS.—This vast salt pan, a few inches only in depth, and having a perfectly level bed, has an extreme length of 140 miles, by a breadth of 25 miles at its broadest part, with a superficial area of 2,230 square miles. The Lake commences near the head of Spencer's Gulf, South Anstralia, and lies on the west side of the Flinders Range, from which it is separated by what are called the Western Plains, a strip of country, say 16 to 20 miles in width, closely crowded with high scrub-covered red sand dunes, which do not look too bad when free from dust-storms, and when viewed from a distance. It is very seldom that water is seen on Lake Torrens, except in small, very boggy creeks round its edges, which are strewn with the skeletons of cattle that in the past have attempted to save time by crossing over them. The general surface of the Lake is composed of salt grime, having a crust in places capable of carry-

DROUGHT.

My doleful theme is long protracted drought,
That robs the landscape of its verdant charms,
The anxious squatter of his nightly sleep,
His flocks of life ; that swells his overdraft,
Till, like invading host, it sweeps away
His cash, his credit, all his dreams of wealth,
And with them, too, a crowd of venal friends ;
And leaves him stranded on life's shore—a wreck !
With vanish'd winter gone are fruitful rains,
Whose brief beneficence had lately made
The face of Nature—erst so brown and parched—
A pleasant picture, bright with varied tints
Of luscious leafage, and the modest flowers,
Which bloom not ev'ry year, but only when
The clouds are most propitious ; gleaming gold,
Pink, bronze, and blue, with crisp and glist'ning white ;
These were their colours, which are faded now
With advent of the spring ; its scorching winds
And cloudless skies, too bright, have dried the soil,
And robbed the plants of sustenance, yet still

ing a horseman, if he is careful, while in others the proverbial duck—so say the dwellers in the vicinity—would bog. Everywhere, however, a fine blue clay, sticky as birdlime, and saturated with the saltiest of brine, lurks immediately below the surface, ready for mischief, and woe to cattle or horses that are caught by it. Lake Torrens at its best could never be mistaken for Como or Lucerne, while in periods of drought Gustave Doré would not have had to go further for inspiration had he desired to paint the Abomination of Desolation. For over twenty years I traversed the Lake Torrens sand dunes, and therefore should be able to speak with due appreciation of the great salt sham and its sylvan surroundings.—R.B.

The everlastings rustle in the wind
Like spectres sad of happy days and flowers.

Farewell to verdure ! to the song of birds !
To lambs' lithe gambols ; to the snort and play
Of wanton steeds, that, quite forgetting toil
And past starvation, o'er the plains career
With thunder waking hoofs and straining nerves,
In strength's elation for the leadership.
So healthy boys, by pedagogue released,
Race helter skelter o'er the village green,
And gaily laugh at childhood's troubles passed,
Unthinking all of troubles yet to come.

Passed is the busy shearing time ; dispersed
The roving band of shearers, who have gone
Like migratory birds to regions south,
Where still the spring is spring, in garb of green,
Refreshed by Heaven's sweet rain, which there descends
With each revolving year ; where grows the vine,
And yields its clusters to the vintner's press ;
Where wheat fields wave, where Sabbath bells are heard,
And gardens flourish, boasting scent and bloom
E'en in the year's hot prime. With shearers go
The active rouseabouts, who filled the shed
With all unwilling sheep ; who rolled and pressed
The woolly harvest from the eager shears,
And filled the bales for market. Gone the teams
Whose bells made musical the frosty nights,
In which their owners' camp fires brightly blazed

By sheltered nooks beneath the whispering trees,
Which told strange stories to their gossip wind ;
And now, except for sheepdogs' lusty bark,
The station slumbers in its normal calm.

As deepens fast the landscape's sober grey,
Evanishes the glad exuberance
Of animated nature ; fresh shorn sheep
Once more to trough and waterhole repair
To quench the thirst dry provender and heat
Engenders in their vitals—thirst that now
Will, as Sol's heat increases, still increase,
And dwell with them till copious rain shall fall.
November passes, but without the floods
That sometimes then from thunder clouds descend
To fill the waterholes, which winter's rains,
Too slowly, gently falling failed to do.
And so all stock must to the wells repair
To drink, as did the thirsty flocks of old,
When Jacob served with Laban to obtain
The lovely Rachel, and the weak-eyed Leah.
Thus weeks glide by, the while a few stray clouds
From time to time the firmament invade,
To vanish as they form, but, save the shade:
So pleasant yet so transient, nothing give
To satisfy the craving of the earth
For one deep draught of all reviving rain.

Now kindly Christmas comes to hold his court,
'Midst sultry glare and ever-present heat ;

But still the rites to him are duly paid,
 Though absent all are blazing fires, the snow,
 And joyous music of the chimes, which tell
 Of peace and gladness from the steeples high
 Of dear old England's churches. In their stead
 Are cloudless skies, a flood of solar heat
 Pervading all things ; doors and windows thrown
 To utmost wideness zephyrs to admit,
 Which bear no coolness on their viewless wings,
 Yet still by breathing on sweat-deluged skins
 Aid those refrigerators ; bring pure air
 To well-nigh fainting souls, which persevere
 In urging their perspiring frames to take
 In such a store of luscious Christmas lading
 That they themselves, though lurking in odd corners,
 Must near be crowded out. And then the tea,
 Hot, black, and sweetened till the spoon nigh stands
 Supported by the *fluid*. How they pour
 Libations—save the mark !—down gullets which
 Have limitless capacities. But now,
 Is it not Christmas ? Shall the trifling heat—
 Some ten above the hundred in the *shade*—
 The cricket match delay ? No ! Pitch the wickets
 Out on the station flat, its dust and lumps
 Will make things lively ; those old tins will do !
 Now choose the sides, and if some oily stains
 Where fat men stand, at eventide shall mark
 The places where they melted, be it so ;
 For Englishmen *must* play the game of cricket,
 Or, like great heroes, perish i' the attempt !

In January, with its length of day
And fierce o'ermastering heat, the whirlwinds stalk.
Like slim, majestic giants, o'er the plain,
All undisturbed by winds, which slumber then,
But wake anon, and in outrageous mood
Pelt earth and sky with suffocating dust,
As did the hand "Kehama." All things here
Are sufferers alike ; the wretched sheep
From early hour to well-nigh sunset stand
With hanging heads in misery—the while
'Gainst filthy *atmosphere their shadows lean—*
Not falling to the ground. By oxen plods
The waterdrawer—grimly cursing—till
From gathered dust and streaming sweat his face
A mask assumes of saline mud, while eyes,
Ears, mouth, and nostrils, aye his very lungs,
Are filled to overflowing, and his beard,
Earthed up to half its depth, becomes a mat—
Would need a hoe to free it. Ropes of mud
Hang from the muzzles of the wretched beasts,
Which he perforce must drive ; their smarting eyes,
Heap'd round with grime, distil great rolling tears,
Which overflow their dams and trickle down
Upon their dusty cheeks. The traveller,
With blanket laden and with waterbag,
Fights grimly on 'gainst dust and scorching wind.
To gain the station, while profanely praying
That swift damnation may on all things fall !
The owner, too, who sits with pipe in mouth
And watches listlessly the smoke which curls

With thick dust eddies in his grimy room,
All sadly thinks of saline bush, defiled
And nauseous made for stock, till purified
By much-desired rain—and so with all,
Who long for *sundown*, when the dust will cease.
The squatter sees each hope of rain dispelled
With anxious mind, for, though not lean his stock,
The feed grows scanty, and remote from wells,
Round which now cluster, from the early morn
To dewless eve, his heat-vexed flocks, which drink,
And drink, and drink again, with sateless thirst
Of dipsomaniac for stronger liquor.

In February gasps the thirsty earth
For needful moisture with unnumbered mouths,
Which but inhale caloric ! Oft at morn,
At eve, and midnight hour the eager eyes
Of anxious mortals scan the heavens to find
Some hope-inspiring portents. Ah ! *at last*
They see vast clouds, their whirling forms surcharged
With electricity, whose baleful fires
Dart earthward, like keen javelins of flame
Hurled by a vengeful God at subjects who
Against Him have rebelled ; His awful voice,
Stupendous in its volume, following
In dread denunciation ! And in wrath
Must be the Ruler of the universe ;
For, save some scattered drops which from them fall,
He seals the clouds, and sends His stormy winds
To hurry them like fugitives away.

With March come longer nights, but still the sun,
In last expiring effort to maintain
The southern summer in her fiery throne,
Shines with a heat supreme ; while round the trough
The sheep—fast failing—seek by liquid aid
To stay the pangs of hunger and of thirst,
Till, when at sundown they set off to seek
The distant acrid bush, they scarce can bear
The loads of water which distend their sides
And make them look like animated casks.
The horses, too, that for the last half-mile
Of their long journey from the far off grass,
Get up an eager canter to attain
The trough—the sheep are leaving—plainly show
Their osseous formation, while their flanks
Are like depleted purses. *How* they drink
And seem to fatten, as the fluid finds
It's way into their stomachs. Will they cease
While whole integrity their skins maintain ?
Or will they burst like overcharged retorts
And flood the dusty plain ? Ah ! see they take
Their muzzles from the water, stand and groan,
Then drink again as if those groans escaping
Provided further space. But all at last,
With heavy gait, like laden wains depart.

A pleasant temperature fair April brings,
And would sweet grass and herbage, if the clouds
Would kindly prove, by yielding liquid store,
Earth's harden'd crust to penetrate, and give

It's potent call to germs of buried seeds,
Which wakes them to vitality ; but drought
With adverse agency their efforts mock
And mortals' hopes dispel. For what were signs
In fruitful years, of coming bounties, now
All go for naught, and, with anticipations,
Like pleasant dreams depart and leave the sky
A boundless ocean of unclouded grey.
But still, with coolness, to the sheep returns
Some slight activity to seek for food
In distant places, unexplored while heat
And thirst in durance held them. Now they stay
At troughs no longer than will well suffice
To quench their eager thirst ; then bend their steps
To paddock's bounds in quest of sustenance !
Now, *surely*, rain *will* fall, for May has come—
That pleasant month by Providence oft blessed ;
But hope deferred which maketh sad the heart,
Still mocks her votaries, who do but find
Delusion in her smiles ; for scattered drops,
Which leave no record that the gauge will mark,
Or tinge of verdure on sad Nature's face,
Alone descend, like messengers of ill,
To tell of cloudland's empty treasury.

In May the mothers of the flock should give
Their bleating young, to crown the squatter's hopes.
Of future harvesting for shearer bands,
And for market stock, but, too weakly grown
From grim starvation's tyranny, they lack
The needful milk to keep in life the lambs

That owe their lives to them, and wanting milk
They want in love ; so, carelessly depart
With comrade sheep and leave their young to die
Of hunger's pangs, or by the cruel beaks
Of felon crows, which gaily feast on eyes
They steal from living sockets. 'Tis a scene
To melt the hardest heart, if yet a heart,
And not a stone, holds empire in the breast !

The rainless days creep into hopeless weeks
And winter comes, all desolate and bare ;
For though the troughs at early morn oft show
A film of ice, the dust is still unslaked—
The bushes foul and sere ; while crawling sheep
Creep in to drink, but, drinking, overload
Their nerveless limbs, which, staggering, refuse
To bear their heavy burthens ; hopelessly
They lie for days—beset by cruel crows—
And seem to pierce with fixed far-seeing eyes
That mystery to all, till grown too weak
To offer faint resistance to their foes
They lose their sight and find relief in death !
The horses, too, in miserable plight,
All masquerade in skins with shaggy hair
They surely must have borrowed to conceal
Their too protruding bones ; the aged mares,
Which last year galloped with the heedless mob,
Now, with their starveling foals, creep out alone,
But come not back again ; the station cows,
That erst the pails with frothing milk o'erflowed,

Now roam at will, and with their large-eyed calves
Search day and night for scanty sustenance !

In deep'ning gloom the weary weeks drag on,
And August comes with shearing in its train,
But shearing of all fun and feasting void—
A dismal travesty on shearings past.
Few are the shearers, and the sheep they shear—
Mere frames of bones enclosed in baggy skins—
Afford no fat for pudding or for lamp,
Or carcase fit for food ; and when their wool
Is taken from them, *how* their lean backs arch,
As, wanting *cud* to chew, they grind their teeth
And shiver in the wind. The teamsters' camps
Have now no tenants, yet from smould'ring fires
The night is filled with gleams of flick'ring flames,
And odours such as sacrificial rites
Might give in days long passed. To jeering crows
It is a carnival where plenty reigns—
A ghastly feast, whose president is Death !

The shearing over, in the shed is piled
The season's clip, excepting some few bales
The camel train, which brought the needful stores,
Has carried with it on its dreary march
To distant railway or the nearest port ;
The rest must stay till rain descending fills
The tanks once more, and opens up the track
Long closed to traffic save by "desert ships."
Few visits now the gloomy squatter pays
To distant portions of his spacious run,

For human effort is of no avail
To stop grim ruin's march or save the stock ;
The *water* duly drawn—and then his store
Of precious horsefeed, *once* expended, he
Can get no more ; and so, as miser hoards
His shining gold, he hoards that precious chaff
For case of great emergency. Besides, whene'er
He drives abroad his eyes encounter sights
That haunt him in his dreams, and render life
A burthen to him. Here—repulsive heap
Of ghastly rottenness—was late a horse
No tempting price would buy ; those forms half hid
In drifted sand, his much prized hogget ewes ;
His oxen also, which admiring friends
So envied him as owning, lie beneath
Those shattered mulgas, while great felted balls,
In heaps, protrude from fast decaying frames,
And tell the cause of death. But why go on ?
One case word-painted, *thousands* are described.

'Tis hot November, and in desperate strait
Are all the animals that still have life,
Yet lack the strength, in enervating heat,
To reach e'en sticks their teeth have not yet tried.
But, when stern Fate implacable appears,
Comes rescue, borne on dust o'erladen gale
That nearly slays them e'er it yields relief ;
For, mounting up, by burning blast propelled,
A mighty cloudbank veils the northern sky,
Whence water-beetles—now in headlong flight—
Precede the coming storm. Fierce lightnings gleam

In all-pervading grandeur ; while o'erhead
Incessant thunder's awful crash and roar,
Like earthquake, shakes the ground. Great rain
drops fall ;
Then, from vast cloudland reservoirs surcharged,
A deluge pours ; and presently the drought,
Like suffered nightmare, is a memory !



A DREAM OF THE DROUGHT.

I lay and thought with harassed mind
Of long continued drought unkind,
That reigned a tyrant dread
O'er hot-wind wasted Western plain,
Whose leafless plants for want of rain
Were perishing or dead.

I sadly mused on fruitless toil,
On Providence forsaken soil,
Of vanish'd prospects fair,
Which, pleasuring my cozen'd sight
Like childhood's soaring bubbles bright,
Had burst like them in air.

To cheer me then I call'd on Hope,
But far too faint was she to cope
With Ruin grim and vast ;
She tarried not when on her ear
Rang out his bitter mocking jeer
From dreary howling blast,

Which, sweeping round in heavy squalls,
Brought choking dust through chinky walls
 And from the cobwebbed thatch,
Where, gathering from day to day,
Like evil thing it lurking lay
 For mischief on the watch.

With sinking heart I sought some plan
To baffle fate ; but what is man
 When under God's dread frown ?
My anxious quest was all in vain,
Till weary grew my aching brain,
 Then gentle Sleep flew down,

And on mine eyelids set her seal,
Though rest I was not yet to feel,
 For, oh, as if the steam
From magic-working witches' pot
Compelled me—with its vapours hot,
 I dreamed a fearful dream.

Yes ! swiftly rising to my view,
A panoramic picture grew,
 Till spread before me lay
The desert plain, where filthy dust,
Whirled high on each successive gust,
 To veil the light of day.

Then silent horror shook my frame,
For sullen thunders upward came ;
 While sandhill, tree, and rock,

Vibrating to their very base,
Distorted Nature's rugged face—
Provoked by earthquake shock.

Shock followed shock, and dust clouds grew
To filthy pall of pitchy hue,
While through it lightnings burst
To meet the flames that from the ground
Rushed redly forth through rift profound,
Like Tophet's fires accursed.

With upward darting tongues of fire,
An uproar came as though in ire
Had risen hellish host,
To vanly try once more, the might
Of HIM who drove them from his sight—
To Kingdom of the lost.

I heard unnumbered thunders roll
With ceaseless crash from pole to pole
Above the ebon mass
Of smoke—sulphurous—which fell
To canopy that earthly hell
No cheering ray could pass.

Three times again strong earthquake shocks
From tott'ring range shook giant rocks ;
And then a spire of flame
Shot upward from the lofty Pound
And shed its baleful glare around,
While molten lava came,

In all-consuming blood-red tide
Of blazing billows, down its side
 To fell each lofty tree,
Which blazed on high and then was lost
Like burning vessel's hamper tossed
 Into a stormy sea.

That flood infernal onward swept
In awful cataracts, which leaped
 From earthquake-shaken height,
Till soon 'twould reach the spot of ground
Where, horror-struck, I glared around
 Upon the fearsome sight.

But, suddenly, from mountain vast
A roar broke forth like cyclone blast :
 I gazed in mute amaze ;
For high above the crater's rim
Three awful phantoms, huge and grim,
 Were seated in the blaze ;

On horrible putrescent heap
Of rotting oxen, steeds, and sheep—
 Fit throne for awful three,
Who gloated with Satanic mirth
On ruin rampant on the earth,
 And most unhappy me.

Despairing rage within me grew :
I questioned that exultant crew,
 And asked what they might find

As food for mirth, when one and all
Affirmed they had, since Adam's fall,
Made war upon mankind ;

That, instruments of wrath divine,
To mercy they may ne'er incline,
But mandates stern obey ;
In storm or calm, on sea or land,
They lurking ever are at hand,
The breath of life to stay.

And then I saw that, as they spoke,
In livid characters there broke
A name upon each brow,
At which the grimmest cried, " Behold !
For all the North to me is sold—
My hopeless slave art thou !

To Me unwillingly each day
A ghastly tithe perforce you pay
Of oxen, steeds, and sheep—
Which these coadjutors of mine
From mortals wring, by law divine,
And on mine altars heap.

" And thou, thyself, to fitly crown
The sacrifice shall—stricken down—
Resign thy vital breath ;
For, tortured in that burning sea,
A prey thou shalt become to me—
All conquering King Death !"

At once each Spectre's livid name
To my enlightened eyes became
 An alphabet of ease ;
And then I knew the comrades dread,
Of Death, were those which drought had bred—
 Starvation and Disease !

But, ah ! my anguish of despair
No mortal man might, living, bear,
 Yet tied was limb and tongue ;
Down rolled that flood of roaring flame,
Those demons' sacrifice to claim—
 It close above me hung ;

One moment more, and then 'twould hide—
My calcined corpse within its tide ;
 I felt its burning heat,
Like fabled dragon's fatal breath ;
My life blood boil with blast of death,
 Yet there was no retreat.

It on me leaped, while gibes and jeers
From spectres three assailed my ears,
 And startled slumber fled ;
For with a stifled cry I woke,
To find thick dust in place of smoke
 In clouds above me spread.

The sweat had streamed from every pore,
And *mud* was darkly coated o'er
 My visage as I lay,

With thick masses round my mouth,
And smarting eyes, while burning drouth
Had made my throat a prey.

From grimy water-vessel, first,
I strove to quench the sateless thirst
Which held me in its chains ;
Then prayed that rain or ruin might
Accord relief, or haste my flight
From cursed Western Plains,

Where I for weary years had toiled,
To be in ev'ry object foiled
By drought, the despot grim,
Till, harassed out in frame and mind,
I curse the destiny unkind
That brought me here to him !



THE MUSIC OF THE RAIN.

In dear old England, long ago,
When courting in a verdant lane,
Methought my sweetheart's whisper low
Was music's most delightful strain ;
But now, in Austral desert sere,
Where oft we woo the clouds in vain,
The sweetest music to mine ear
Is liquid whisper of the rain.

No other power, it seems to me,
The harassed mind so well relieves
As raindrops fingered symphony—
The keys unnumbered thirsty leaves.
With cadence low, like ocean's sigh,
Begins the all-pervading strain ;
Then swells, with loud-voiced winds to vie,
This cheerful music of the rain.

With magic might, that monotone
Drives haggard care in haste away ;
The squatter sees the run *his own*,
And hosts of happy lambs at play ;
Kind Fortune's smiles are his he deems,
While truant Hope returns again ;
Her whispers mingle in his dreams
With midnight music of the rain !



FAREWELL TO THE WESTERN PLAIN.

Haunt of sirocco, that from arid North
On scorching pinions wings its headlong flight
To make untenable a garb of cloth,
I'll chant your praises, *not* with gay delight
Of mistress-toasting, banjo-strumming knight,
But vastly otherwise, indeed ; for so
I feel constrained by ever thirsty plight
That holds me in captivity, although
Unnumbered trickling streams adown my visage flow.

Whilst, unromantic, you are not too bad
When winter's rains have washed away your veil
Of grimy dust ; and idle lass or lad
May wildflowers gather, and, in coat of mail,
A wheel-track-bothered wandering desert snail ; *
To wonder where that mystery had been,
That baked or fried was not its tender tail
By fierce Apollo ? then, with cruel mien
To crush the hapless thing amidst the herbage green.

Sweet music have you, if a curlew's scream,
A vile crow's bass, or dingo's alto note
Can be commended as transcendent cream,
A skim above the warbling of a goat—
That sings of love in highly-scented coat ;
I like it not ; but then I'd have you know
I don't like you, and would not grudge a groat
To any rhyming, rhapsodising beau
Who'd penny jews-harp twang and sing of dog and crow.

But still on you a score of years I've dwelt,
Fair, fickle Fortune courting all the while ;
Yet, though deep passion for the jade I felt,
Too rarely on me did she deign to smile,
And then, alas, 'twas merely to beguile ;
For when, elated, I my beaver cocked
And rushed to hug her in fond lover's style,
Her eldest daughter's fell companions flocked
Like brood of harpies foul, and dismal failures mocked.

* The desert snail appears amongst the sand dunes immediately after heavy rains, though, perhaps, during a two years' period of drought none have been seen. This desert snail is one of the dry country mysteries.—

On you, with vast temerity, I backed
A bounding Pegasus, and comrades fled
In abject terror at the daring act ;
For rightaway I *gave the steed his head*,
As was my wont with bucking quadruped.
Ah, me ! 'twas wonderful how they skedaddled ;
And afterwards in sheepyard, hut, or shed
I'd solus be before the brute I straddled,
Because my friends would bolt ere he was fairly saddled.

A super bombshell force within us lay—
My steed and I—a company to scatter,
And luckless stranger who might happen nigh
Would wonder *firstly* what might be the matter,
Then with the antics of a hair-brained hatter
With other fools incontinently fly,
Till presently a distant pitter-patter
To measured prancing made a faint reply,
Then naught save silent scrub would fill my eagle eye.

Like writhing worm impaled on cruel hook,
Or coster's ass impelled by bleeding "*raw*,"
My friends grew dummeled ; read my bushland book
To even fancy they some fair verse saw,
And shyly hint at craving of the maw
For further provender ; though some still vowed
They'd rather listen to complaining saw
By file afflicted, or the screeching loud
Of terror-striking notes, which *skirl* o'er Scottish crowd.

Now once again my Pegasus shall spurt
 With rhythmic action. Ah ! he will not gee,
 But intimates that he has *pride* to hurt ;
 That halting prose—however lame it be—
 Is good enough, aye, far too good for thee.
 And, truly, now methinks 'twould do as well,
 While doubtless you will readily agree
 That verbal monotone should ring the knell
 Of vanished, toilsome years. So Western Plains, fare-
 well !

January, 1877.



TO ÆOLUS.

Great ruler of the restless race,
 From Zephyr, robed in airy grace,
 To Boreas the bully,
 Pray send us, as we sail along,
 That member of thy gusty throng—
 The one to suit us fully.

From Western plains, swift rushing down
 Through Port Augusta's sandy town,
 Let burning "Northern buster"
 Inflate our lofty canvas stout—
 From Spencer's Gulf to urge us out
 To where the South winds bluster

From Borda's light to "Stormy Cape,"
O'er Ind's wide ocean, let escape
 Thy Eastern subjects balmy,
With chilly Southern ones at times
To temper heat in languid climes—
 Full oft too close and calmy.

And recollect, now, gentle king,
Don't suffer that outrageous thing,
 The cyclone, to come ringing
In mad'ning waltz, with shrieking glee—
Our timbers torn on raging sea,
 And corpses to be flinging.

So chain him up with double care
Till, favoured by the current fair,
 We pass Agulhas' shallows.
Then never mind the homicide,
But loosen him to madly ride
 O'er Neptune's foaming billows ;

Till "South-East Trades" we then attain,
No Northern member of thy train
 Permit to near us rustle :
For, kindly Master Æolus,
Although we do not make a fuss,
 We're really in a bustle.

To pleasure us you will, of course,
Imbue the Trades with steady* force
 In South Atlantic ocean—

* The south-east trade wind is the steadiest in the world.—R.B.

To urge our spreading, snow-white wings
To latitudes where slimy things
From purple sails find motion ;

Where greedily *sea-lawyers** roam,
And Neptune used to be at home,
With barber rude and triton ;
And where fierce squalls, with noisy wrath
Like bullies, cross the vessel's path,
Poor Jack to vent their spite on ;

Be certain that when we are there
Those roaring imps shall all be fair
(That is, our good ship *after*).
Of outward-bounders take no heed ;
Us only trouble on to speed,
Like staunch old equine shafter.

In Northern Trades much easting put,
That through the waves with cleaving "foot"
Our ship, her course aye lying,
Round "Western Islands," right or wrong,
Shall, checkless, reach thy vassal strong,
O'er Western Ocean flying ;

This cause to blow with steady might,
Till, having passed the Isle of Wight,
We take a tug and pilot ;
Then, gliding up the winding Thames,
We'll laugh at all the little games
On ocean played by thy lot !

* *Sea-lawyers, sharks.*

Of course, you'll note, dear Æolus,
Although I've often dwelt on *us*

In this my prayer to you, Sir,
No selfishness is in it found
Not common to the *homeward bound*,
Or other vessel's crew, Sir.

So do your best ! and we will pour
Libations, when we reach the shore
Of proud Britannia's Island,
To thee, kind Æolus, and all
The restless vagrants from thy hall
That roam o'er sea and dry land.

Ship Carnaqueen, January, 1877.



TO AN ALBATROSS, IN THE CENTRE OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN.

Whence came you, ocean-roaming bird,
That on wide pinions circles free,
As though your journey you deferred
To linger in our company ?
Far, far indeed the distant land,
Surf-beaten, lies o'er billows grand.

No compass have you to decide
Your lonely course to kin and mate
In storm or calm, o'er trackless tide,
You never fear a lost one's fate,

Though eagerly, with gleaming eyes,
You scan the waters for supplies.

How fare you when titanic waves
Run riot with the hurricane?
When loud the hellish uproar raves,
And chaos heaps the maddened main?
As sustenance what find you *then*
Till peaceful calms prevail again?

How rest you? Is it on the deep,
Rocked gently by the rolling swell?
Does tumult minister to sleep
When cyclone sounds the good ship's knell?
Or do you slumber in your flight,
Wind-wafted through the storm-scourged night?

Full four degrees our speedy prow
Has, cleaving through the waters, sped,
Since last we saw that crimson glow
Flame upward from the day-god's bed;
Yet easily you wheel around
As he descends with glory crowned.

Oh, what, with all his gold, is man?
What all his science, ages taught?
For could the wisest mortal plan
An albatross in life of thought?
Yet are you but a simple thing
To *Him* who gave you life and wing!

Ship Carnaqueen, Southern Ocean, January, 1877.

ROUNDING THE CAPE.

The night was dark, each starry spark
Was veiled in heavy fog ;
While hanging slack were sheet and tack,
Unused the patent log.
Old ocean's breast no snowy crest
Of foaming wave could show ;
For, lacking blast, each groaning mast
Waved, ghostlike, to and fro.

The captain sighed as o'er the tide
He vainly strove to gaze,
And whistled low to tempt, you know,
A breeze from out the haze.
Then muttered he, " When *shall* I see
Fair London town once more ?
These calms so bad will drive me mad ;
I'd *rather* tempests roar."

I nudged his arm and said, " A calm
Was peaceful and serene ;
While tempests rude provided food
For sharks—white, blue, and green.
But, *look* here, Cap, you *dear* old chap,
What means that thoughtful scowl,
Dejected walk, and lack of talk ?"
He, mockingly, did growl—

“ We’re off *the Cape*, the *noted* Cape,
The *dreaded* Cape of Storms,
Where *awful* waves o’er seamen’s graves
For *ever* rear their forms ;
And in the dark the Dutchman’s bark
Is looked *in vain* for still,
When wild winds wail, and mast and sail
Must bend them to their will.”

“ Is *that* the Cape ?” quoth I, agape :
No awful storms have we.
Yon sullen swell alone might tell
Of *some-time* stormy sea.
But, oh ! ah me ! what’s that I see ?
Flames whereso’er I turn !
Is magic might abroad to-night
To make old ocean burn ?”

“ *No* fire is there, I do declare :
You see not any flames,
But shark and sprat and such as that
Are at their little games.
’Tis *friction* makes those shining wakes,
As when a catskin muff
With might and main against the grain
You rub—’tis phosphor stuff !”

“ Ah ! say you so ? That’s queer you know,
And then those saline stars
That so abound in shoals around—
Are they what sprat mammas

Provide as food for ocean brood—
The million-teeming spawn ?
Now, captain dear, *do* make things clear
As fog-fledged London dawn.”

“ ‘Though *not* so green as horse marine,
I own they puzzle me ;
But p’raps they’re bones which Davy Jones
Has ground beneath the sea.
Now, off you go to read below,
The lamps are burning clear ;
No catspaw light may blow to-night
While you are yarning near.”

“ My eyes are sore, and bookish lore
Will little pleasure me,
And so I’ll walk and with you talk,
For *here* I fain would be.
Now, captain dear, let’s have some beer,
Or else a glass of rum,
And Neptune then shall think us men,
Of wind to merit some.”

“ Oh ! *you* be blowed !”—that sentence flowed
From off my tongue untold—
“ But *sheer* off now unto your vrow,
You prating landsman bold.
My heart is sad, my head is bad ;
Next trip *the Horn* I’ll round :

Hang berg and floe*, should *fair winds blow*
When *I* am homeward bound !"

To burly mate, not *too* elate,
I went to question some ;
His gimlet gaze transfixed the haze ;
I thought him deaf and dumb.
But *was* he though—that sea-bear ?—No ;
For *sailing orders* came,
Which had to do—I think a few—
With *worse* than *seeming* flame.

I did not stop, lest more might drop,
Like aught save honey-dew,
But dived below, and straight did go
To gentle partner true ;
Then said, " My dear, 'tis vastly queer ;
This *is* a sullen sea :
From captain brave to tarry knave
They're crusty as can be."

" With *you* about I've *little* doubt
Their comments *would* be queer ;
I'm *cross* myself, you *prosing* elf,
So, *bother*, you just clear ! "

* NOTE.—The great drawback to the Cape Horn route from Australia to England is the prevalence of icebergs and still more dangerous ice floes, which greatly discount the advantages to be derived from the prevailing strong westerly winds.—R. B.

Well, clear I did, as I was bid,
And soon was sound asleep
In "blanket bay," as sailors say,
On ever-heaving deep.

When morning broke and I awoke
There blew a south wind strong,
And Nor'-Nor'-West, o'er waves foam-dressed,
Our good ship bowled along ;
Then bland to me the mate could be,
The skipper frank as aye :
Their mood unkind was left behind,
The helmsman he was gay.

"Hurrah !" quoth he, "we're bound, d'ye see,
For smoky village gay ;
The *Cape's* astarn, as you may larn,
Ef you'll jest squint this way ;
And look here, Ship, I'd *like a nip*—
The skipper needn't twig ;
"Taint every day," as landsmen say,
We kills a blessed pig."

And now 'tis plain as seamen's bane
A calm may beat a gale,
And worry more than cyclone's roar
Brave tars who homeward sail.
So if they swear, and crusty are
To prosy landsmen—why,
If you reflect, you'll *not* expect
A smile and soft reply.

Ship Carnaqueen, off the Cape of Good Hope.

THE DOUBLE GHOST.

A LEGEND OF THE LINE (FOR THE YOUNGSTERS).

FYTTE 1.

Tom Tabby was a furry pet, a favourite with all
The company, from captain brave to happy children small ;
As watchful as fox terrier, than circus clown more agile,
In constitution most robust, not like some felines fragile ;
And though he knew too much by far to leap through arms
all day,
He used to prowl the livelong night the roaming rats to
slay,
And if he ate not myriads he kept those pests at bay ;
For though we heard them skirmishing between the decks,
none came
To range at night the steward's den, its toothsome tarts to
claim.
All stateroom doors wide open yawned, except for waving
blinds,
That fair limbs, veiled by modest Night, might woo the
cooling winds,
Which through the side ports rambled free, and eke some
salt seaspray—
The sleepers recked *that* little if the rats would keep away.
But, ah ! another state of things loomed nearer than we
thought,
When not an inch-wide chink might glint in doorway or in
port,
For Thomas, from topgallant rail, before the dawn of day,
Just tumbled headlong overboard abreast of Algoa Bay.

The mate and captain wondered much—they said he
jumped, not fell—

I do not know—I was asleep—and therefore cannot tell.

On wings now dark with starry sparks*, now purest water
bright,

Old Time, the thief, sped silently, while gay were rats at
night—

They knew our champion was dead before he well was
drowned—

And squeaking Io pæans shrill skipped gleefully around,
In cabin and in foc'sle rude, by swinging lanterns' light ;
The seamen sought to slaughter 'em, the children screamed
with fright,

And though the heat was terrible each stateroom door was
closed,

While fair ones wriggled sleeplessly when they at least had
dozed ;

For in their startled hearing rang unholy squeals and
squeaks

From quadrupedal choristers at wild nocturnal freaks,
While on the table mustering, or worse, upon my slate,
To play the dickens with the tale o'ernight I'd written
late ;

A malison upon them all, but " Rheims' Prince Bishop "
e'en

Had cursed, and kept on cursing, till himself had died of
spleen

Before those rats had turned a hair—the foragers unclean !

* Borrowed this beautiful simile from a kerosene case.—AUTHOR.

But, ah! black fate was pouncing then on pirates so
 pernicious,
From tender, toothless ones in nests to grey ones old and
 vicious.
Yes, though no trap nor feline foe might rend that scented
 host,
It scattered like a spendthrift's coin before a hybrid ghost.

FYTTE II.

We're on the sultry Rubicon our Captain calls "the line,"
Where spirit loving sea god once did levy liquid fine,
And had his suckling seamen shaved, some luckless lands-
 men, too,
With those afflicting instruments he numbered one and two,
Which wrung a wrathful verbiage from innocents, who then
Used, often, azure adjectives would shame much older
 men ;
Indeed, far more cerulean than e'en the ocean waves,
From which Nep, Amphitrite, and their oakum-bearded
 knaves—
Sham Tritons—issued foc'sleward to hold queer pagan
 rites,
With screaming farces oft commenced to end in savage
 fights,
When blood from noses freely flowed, evoked by brawny
 fists,
And multitudes of shooting stars were seen through sudden
 mists ;

But not of knave Neptunian, of razor, brush, or bath,
Have I to give description here, but eerie thing of wrath—
Of wrath to rats *more* terrible *than* that Achilles bore
To Hector, when the armour he of slain Patroclus wore.
Then squeak, marauders odious! squeak! squeak! your
 end is near;
Though marlinespikes amused you much, you now must die
 of fear.

Apollo in his chariot, with axle-bed on fire,
Had rushed above Columbus land, as if that god in ire
Had supped on blood-red capsicums, and tippled by mistake
Old Etna's seething lava floods, his burning thirst to slake,
Until he'd left too little heat in Cyclop's forge, or stove,
For one-eyed crew to make a new and tip-top bolt of Jove,
Yet lame old Boss, if on the watch, had judged by ruddy
 glow
That all was right, with lots of light, in workshops down
 below.
Then Mrs. Brown told Mrs. Jones "the morrow would be
 hot;"
And I—well, I just dived below to take another tot—
For hot or cold, we're oft-times told, there's nothing like a
 sup
Of right down three-star *battleaxe* to keep the courage up;
Annexing Jones's hammock then I coiled myself away
To muse upon the dream-like past, fast swelling day by day,
And watch with scarcely conscious eye the night with starry
 crown
On wings, each moment darkening, o'er ocean lighting
 down,

While to and fro, like restless bear, the skipper paced his deck,
As if he thought the *doldrums* there quite tantamount to
wreck ;
And, as 'neath ringing puffs of smoke he passed me swinging there,
He peevish observations made, and I made answers fair,
For never heeding what he said I grunted "Yes," or
"No,"
And wished he'd *lash his donkey well* and start for Jericho.

But, ah ! dear me, that's singular—"Me-ow, me-ow, me-ow !"
It is a feline songster, sure, beneath our starboard bow.
It nearer came, it louder grew, 'twas just beside the waist,
And so from out that "Ashantee" I sprang in headlong
haste,
For sweetly, sadly musical, those tones I knew right well ;
Yet for a mouser it was *damp* beneath an ocean swell.
And then methought some mermaiden, all hopeless on the
shelf,
Had taken Thomas for a pet—the lucky furry elf ;
But yet *that* really could not be—his mew betokened pain,
And so I bawled out, "Captain, hi ! here's Tommy back
again !
There ! there ! beneath the mizen chains ; just hear him
crying out !
'Tis Thomas for a dollar, sir—a *dozen* if you doubt.
Call aft your salt-junk slanderers ! Quick, lower down the
gig !
This is a strange phenomenon, a most surprising rig !

Here, Toby, Tom, and Wrinkly Joe, you, red-haired Davy,
come !

Fish up Tom Tabby presently and drink your fill of rum !”

“ On *that* I’ll clap a stopper quick ; such things I do not
wish,”

The captain growled ; “ besides, the thing is *just* a great
catfish.

So forward to the cat-head, men, the cat-falls overhaul,
The cat-hook, and the cat-fall block, for we shall need them
all.

Now, capture all the rats you *can*, and bait them with the
hook !”

“ Aye, aye, sir !” cried the sailors sly, and went for rats to
look—

That is, they stowed themselves away in tarry-smelling
nook.

We, leaning o’er the taffrail then, beheld a fearsome sight—

No pestilential pussy fish, but ghostly thing alight !

Quite useless clumsy cat-hook there, absurd a live-rat bait :

It was a frightful fellowship in phosphorescent state—

A shark of hue sulphurous, with horror-gleaming eyes,

Which glared as if astonishment had made of them a prize.

And well it might feel ill at ease, for in its lantern frame

A “ scarlet cat,” all teeth and claws, ranged nimble as a
flame,

Or gay and festive squirrel pet, fresh caged and not too tame.

But, ah ! no gall or gizzard tough that shark had left to
tear,

For Tom had been industrious and scratched its inside bare !

And thus, like famed Kilkenny cats, they'd rubbed each other out,

Though still the fiend-fish held its prey like poacher's bag a trout.

But Tom, with pangs particular, shall cause to grin and gape
That squaline shade satanical, which, off the stormy Cape,
Will share with Vanderdecken's ghost its cruising grounds
for aye,

Except when to Nep's shaving shop it wretchedly may
stray.

FYTTE III.

The morning's sun shines cheerily, it gildeth sea and sail,
And rats that to the ratlines small are hanging by the tail,
Not cunningly, like 'possums cute on gumtrees' waving
twigs,

But ghastly, as on gambles strong depend well-scalded pigs.
No more on choicest provender those vermin vile may
feast ;—

They're dead as old Methusaleh, or Cæsar at the least !
I gazed on them in wonderment ; I saw no mark of claws,
Or aught of feline handiwork that sudden death might
cause.

So to the captain, on the poop, I hied, and said, " Good
lack !"

I've seen a modern miracle since Tommy's ghost came
back :

If rats hath slain a hecatomb ; they're hanging dead outside !”

He answered not one syllable, but stretched his talk-m il
wide

To give vent to the laughter rude I hoped might crack his
side.

The meaning of his merriment I begged to learn, and then
He asked, his eyes like gooseberries, to hear my tale again.

I said 'twas plain as sailors' duff, with not one plum at all ;
I thought him apoplectical—I feared lest he might fall :

He did not though ; for presently he caught his breath and
said,

“ The *ghost of poor old Tommy* ! No ; 'twas prentice Tom
and Ned ;

They trapped 'em in the deckhouse there and knocked 'em
on the head !”

“ Oh ! *hang* it all ! Why, *don't* you know ? You *must*
remember well

That feline, squaline, *double ghost*, like awful ones which
dwell

In ' pit ' pet parsons preach about, when consciences they'd
shake—

A crib than *this* more tropical—so *you* should surely quake,
While awful crammers uttering, as you've been coining now.”

The captain like a lion roared, “ I'd like to learn as how.”

I wagged my head right knowingly ; I stared him in the
face,

And, with my finger pointing straight, I argued the case.

“Ho ! ho !” said I, “sham Abraham, your memory is short :
You *don't* remember all the *rats* you ordered to be caught ;
Nor yet about the *pussy-fish* you sent your shellbacks all
To capture from the *cat-head* there with *cat-hook* and *cat-fall* !”

At this the villain had a fit—a laughing fit, oh, dear !—
As if he'd taken laughing gas, or tippled too much beer.
He shook his head, he stamped his feet, he sat him swiftly
down,
And snatching off his battered hat, on deck he dashed it
down ;
Then, rubbing at his starting eyes, from which some moisture
ran,
Exclaimed, “Oh ! oh ! this *is* a go ; you'll kill me yet, my
man !
That pussy-fish ! the cat-fall block !—you've dreaming been
again,
From last night stuffing cold plum-duff, enough for twenty
men !
I'm busy now, so off you go and yarn to Johnny Greens,
In very verdant rigging, of the goose-step horse marines !” ■

Ship Carnaqueen, the Equator, 1877.



DAVEY JONES' LOCKER.

A SEA DREAM.

A foaming chaos is the deep ; a storm-rent shroud the sky ;
And of the good ship Albatross the last man left am I !
Fierce briny floods my mouth invade, like whips the surges
sting ;

Those eerie voices in the blast will soon my requiem sing :
For, with a shrill, despairing cry, I clutch at shattered spar ;
Then sink through ocean's formless wastes from elemental
war,

Down, down, still down, till tempest's din decreases to a
hum,

Like echoes, indistinctly heard, of distant muffled drum ;
And presently, in silent deeps, the light grows dim and grey,
As that in grand old Gothic aisle when fades the winter's day ;
And oh ! what crowds of gliding ghosts surround and wel-
come me,

Who just am come, though still in life, to bear them
company !

Those friendly ghosts have mournful eyes, but little else
beside,

Though outlines, indistinctly seen, are blending with the
tide ;

But, just as if some ocean fiend is prowling for his prey,
My phantom friends, whate'er they be, are spirited away

And oh that I were so myself—to *almost any place* !
For am I not with *devil-fish* now standing face to face ?
Yes, face to face with octopus—far worse than gorgon's
head—

A fearsome thing which battens on the living and the dead !
And, oh ! upon my senses all a nameless horror falls
That surely has no parallel outside Gehenna's walls !
Yes, 'tis a terror infinite—a marrow-freezing fright—
Past nightmare's agony supreme to gormandising wight ;
For awful foe, with tentacles all writhing in the sea,
Is there debating in it's mind how it shall torture me !
Ah ! *now* it comes—that livid thing, in hell's worst goblin
shape,

And I from pangs unspeakable—oh ! *how* shall I escape ?

Than octopus a shark would cause a less ungoverned fear,
I surely did not wish for one, and yet a shark is here.
But active are my senses all : I see the monsters close,
And terrible the contest is of those tremendous foes :
With rending jaws, with trenchant beak, with tentacle and
tail,

They far transcend the wild waves' war, the fury of the
gale ;

They bite, they tear, roll here and there, while bubbles fill
the sea.

Far better are those fiends employed than banqueting on
me,

And so I do not interfere ; but, urged by prudence, fly
Through near adjacent cavern's mouth, and bid them both
good-bye !

A cavern!—Aye, a boundless one, roofed in by rolling
waves,
It's floor the ooze that dust-like falls on gallant seamen's
graves ;
While round about where'er I gaze are tempest-shattered
wrecks,
With men of every bygone age upon their silent decks :
Here Vikings and Phœnicians old, and there a fair-haired
boy,
Whose parents nightly pray for him they deem their pride
and joy ;
At mother's breasts small infants sleep beside decrepid age,
And brawny naval combatants, still grim with battle's rage ;
Here, too, the peaceful merchant crew, the pirate's bloody
band,
And slavers, with their human prey, lie stretched on every
hand ;
True lovers in each other's arms are locked, as if in life ;
Foes clutched in drowning's dread embrace ; the husband
with the wife ;
Of every tribe of Adam's race, of every garb and clime ;
They waiting are, in silent place, the end of tide and time :
While, mixed with shells and seaweed strange of varied hue
and form,
Are piled the treasures of the deep, the harvests of the
storm ;
Earth's merchandise, in box and bale, in heaps on heaps
are rolled ;
By spear and shield, by sword and gun, and wealth of coin
untold,

Unheeded gorgeous raiment lies, unheeded precious stones.
But where is he, their treasurer, the dreaded Davey Jones ?

The waters wave—I gaze aloft, and view, with wond'ring
eyes,

The lord majestic of the place in giant bulk arise ;
For, oh ! his feet are in the ooze, his head amidst the waves
Of that far-reaching, restless thing that every country laves ;
And, while his crowning locks are bright, with thunder-
clouds o'erspread,

Those round his brows are snowy white and fringed with
icebergs dread ;

The pupil of his eye is blue, it's iris green as grass,
While through his mouth, with coral teeth, unnoticed fleets
might pass ;

Of many hues his tangled beard, that tosses on his breast,
And mingles with the foam of rage in tempest's wild un-
rest ;

Scant neck has he, but rolling swells huge shoulders are,
and strong

Of arms and hands—in restless waves he has a countless
throng ;

For weapons he has currents strange, dread icefloes, rocks,
and shoals,

Wherewith to slay bold voyagers . He cannot touch their
souls.

Small gleanings hath he from disease, rich crops from
nation's wars :

His charnel-house contains them all, as boundless space its
stars ;

And though irreverently talk audacious seamen of him,
'Tis certain, though they've cause to fear, they also ought to
love him ;

For when not vexed nor urged to ill by storm wind's lawless
brood,

His face is fair to look upon and placable his mood :
Then human welfare fosters he, and fosters not in vain ;—
He bears the commerce of the world, and sends the fruitful
rain

To smiling sister by his side, who soon would faint and die
Were he not here to work her weal with HIM who rules on
high ;

But when black night and raging blast afflict his subject
sea,

He rises in terrific wrath, and terrible is he.

Now, bending down, the vast one says, " Ho ! mortal, whom
art thou

That to my locker penetrates? Great risk is thine I vow ;
For art thou not far, far below those depths to which
descend

The divers bold, who, bribed with gold, their services will
lend

To grasping greed, which fain would wrest from me my
lawful gain,

And who, sustained by smuggled air, depart to land again ;—
On *thee* I see no vestment strange, no monster-scaring
helm,

And where thou art my weight alone should crush and over-
whelm.

Then tell to me who thou may'st be, and if I find thee true,
To upper world thou shalt return, but falsehood thou shalt
rue !”

I tell my name, and say I came not willingly at all,
But that himself had hurled me there through portico and
hall ;

And now, fair sir, if I intrude, just hurl me back agen ;
I like not this your residence—I almost say his *den*.”

He smiles, as if he reads my thoughts, and pointing all
around,

Exclaims, “ Behold thy fellow-worms, who thickly strew the
ground,

For some are grim and terrible as e'er they, cursing, died,
And awful was their mortal fear while sinking through the
tide !

Now view those forms with faces bright which eastward
turnèd be ;

They merely came for calm repose from life's aye-stormy sea.
Scant terrors had I in their eyes, for they had hope and trust
In Him, whose humble slave am I—like meanest thing of
dust.

At *His* commands I stretch mine hands to crush the haughty
pride

Of those who boast they rule the waves and subjugate the
tide ;

And though I take the good and true, with those of evil
mind,

They know, when in their haven fair, that I have been most
kind ;

Then watch and pray, and hope like they. Now wake and
tell to men

That I am *not* the Evil One, and this is *not* his den !”

Ship Carnaqueen, February, 1877.



PHOSPHORESCENT HIGH JINKS.

A DREAM OF THE WESTERN OCEAN.

Nep's shaving shop is far astern,
With scorching calms, which well-nigh burn
The men-of-war, called Portuguese,
Whose filmy sails invite a breeze ;
The “doldrums,” too, which language blue
Evoked from ever-hauling crew,
Are, with their squalls and drenching rain,
Discomforts of a distant main.

Now flying-fish and albacore
Are seldom seen our prow before,
As, gaily on the starboard tack,
Aloft, aloft all sail we crack,
To woo the steady trade-wind strong,
Which wakes the waves' low-murmured song ;
While scrapers, wielded by the tars,
Precede the grease-pot down the spars,

And soojymoogy round the deck
From dingy paint removes each speck,
That gallant ship, when sailing in
To port, may shine like brand-new pin.

For Ursa Major, ranging high,
To famed Polaris guides the eye,
Which shining star, like beacon light,
Delights the British seaman's sight ;
For does it not, like compass, tell
The course the homeward-bound love well
Which leads to joys on native soil—
Their sweet rewards for slavish toil.

The second watch is set, and now
Diana, with her crescent bow,
O'er heaving ocean westward floun,
Has left the stars to shine alone ;
While in my hammock, swinging free,
I practise for a singing bee
A nasal song that critics might
Object to in the stilly night.
But, sweet or no, the cabin-boy
Now cuts it *short with* loud " Ahoy !"
With heedless haste I upward spring,
'Gainst carline hard my head to bring,
And, but for far too solid deck,
My downward plunge the ship would wreck
Yet Davy's yells are not of fright ;—
No, rather of supreme delight ;

And so methinks there cannot be
Fresh dangers on the midnight sea,
Unless for Davy (by-the-way,
Whom, could I catch, I'd well-nigh slay).

"You scarlet imp ! you sea-cook's son !
Look what your foolery has done !"
And then, right strange it is to tell,
I find we see each other well ;
For, shining through the deadlight there,
Streams down a pallid, ghastly glare,
Which, lighting up that sea-boy's face,
Reveals no line of saintly grace.
"What's up ?" I cry again, and he
Replies, "You'd better come and see !"

"The ship is burning !"—"No, not it ;
The sea *is* though a little bit !"
"The sea ? They used to say in flames
In time I'd set the River Thames ;
But as for ocean, come now, Dave,
Confess yourself a lying knave !"
He will not, so in boot-urged flight
Flies deckward, like a startled sprite.

Then in those things which ladies fair
To hear of spoken cannot bear,
Yet from their hubbies fiercely wrest
To flaunt as knight would haughty crest,
I rush on deck, and to my gaze
The ocean gleams as if ablaze,

For every wave you'd think a lamp
Of "Davy" (Jones), defying damp,
Each glowing with phosphoric light,
That darker leaves the dome of night ;

Now, perching on to'-gallant rail,
'Neath breezy foot of swelling sail,
I gaze and gaze until my eyes
A picture view to cause surprise ;
For, circus-like, and spreading wide,
A vast pavilion girds the tide
With walls of night shades dim and dark,
And vaulted roof with many a spark
Of shining silver, while the floor
With gleaming flakes is studded o'er—
A ballroom on the boundless deep,
Where Neptune's self may revels keep,
And, ah ! the company I see
In court-dress—strict décolleté.

With sudden crash and sounding din,
The cyclone bandsmen now begin
An overture, at which you'd rail,
On shipboard in a roaring gale ;
For Æolus and gusty throng
Than Stentors are of lung more strong,
Besides extemporaneous
Are all the airs they play for us,
Wagnerian, perhaps, at times,
Then softly sweet as distant chimes.

When Triton concho basso plays
Uproarious becomes the praise,
For, with his cheeks like bagpipes blown,
His music o'er the tide is thrown ;
Till starry urchin near the sky
A cat-call ventures on the sly ;
But Jupiter, with awful frown,
Such low vulgarity puts down ;
For Jove, with vastly proper train,
Attends this pageant of the main.

Great Nep, with oakum beard and locks,
A hornpipe encores from his box ;
For British tars aboard a wreck
All cut and shuffle on its deck ;
Yet still, with roguish, rolling eye,
Nep ogles fair Salacia sly,
And seems to care (the scamp) a mighty
Little for his Amphitrite,
While well she knows how he behaves
With naughty nymphs 'midst conscious waves.

Nep's sposa with her father now,
And Doris sits with gloomy brow,
While they unto the "oldest gods"
Reply with deferential nods ;
For Oceanus and his wife
Spin prosy yarns of early life
And such-like twaddle, for you see:
No cardroom there appears to be.

Where old Neptunian fogies may
Talk scandal while bezique they play.

Mature Eurynome, still fair,
With daughters slim and debonair,
Are here to-night, by Nep's desire,
While Venus lends them her attire,
That fascination may enhance
Each pose of limb and sprightly glance ;
And doubtless, e'er the dance be o'er,
Unnumbered conquests they will score.
Now, as they pose themselves with care,
Sea dandies crowd around to stare,
And, were these revels not so damp,
Bright Venus would perinit that scamp,
Young Cupid, with his bow and darts,
At random to transfix all hearts ;
And, as it is, from high above,
The ever-watchful god of love
At Æolus a shaft lets fly
That causes him to cast his eye
At Dione, the grandam white
Of that young mischief-working wight :

Indeed, when " Rule Britannia " he—
The wind-god—tries by Nep's decree,
He suddenly forgets to play,
And sighs in true Strephonian way,
When, strange to tell, fair Dione
In fainting state appears to be,

And should he not resume his lay
Will like a snowflake pass away ;
But Nep, who loves to see her ride
To piping winds, in conscious pride,
On coursers blue, with crests of green,
Now touches with his trident keen
Great Æo, till he deems a ray
Has wagged its stinging tail his way,
So rubs and blows and feels unkind,
Till out of tune and out of wind,
While round and round the dancers fly,
And Dione goes glancing by
In veil of phosphorescent light,
Before which flies the shades of night.

Fair Thetis and her nereids
Now enter, nude as Peri kids ;
For nothing can improve their lines—
See Flaxman's exquisite designs ;
These quickly mingle with the throng,
While Nep, with handshake warm and long,
His "ancient friend divinely fair,"
Achilles' mother, welcome there,
And seats her at his dexter hand
To flourish of his conch-shell band.

Now lightly trip, with flying feet,
The sea-green sisters trim and neat,
In gleaming garb of stellar ray,
Transparent as the light of day.
But who are they with yellow locks,

Who to those comely gills are jocks?
Why, gay young river-gods who glance
At lovely nymphs, with whom they dance,
So warmly that a frozen sea
Would by their glances melted be ;
But Oceanus and his vrow,
Old Tethys, will not them allow
To more than glance, for they are old,
With wrinkled brows and pulses cold,
And so their frail descendants bright
They're guarding well throughout the night,
And even frown on Nep when he
With some sweet nymph would make too free.

Around sit passé saline dames—
Wall nosegays with unholy names—
Who sea-god partners with a glance
Entrap at times to join the dance ;
While sirens, singing loud and clear,
Glide round and at the dandies leer.
But these all slily wink and laugh
At charms that are but half and half ;
For though they're fresh as one might wish,
Those mermaids run to too much fish ;
But fish or flesh, in galopade
To beat their paces would be hard,
And dolphins blue which bear their trains
Get broken-winded for their pains.

A horrid shape now meets my sight,
Which hovers in the outside night,

And glowers with tremendous eye
At whirling throng, like huge Paul Pry,
Especially when Galatea
Thinks softly on her mortal dear,
And sometimes, just to soothe her mind,
Permits some giddy god to twine
His arm around her faultless waist,
The light fantastic joy to taste ;
And then, ye gods ! vast Polypheme
His single orb with rage *does* gleam,
And, could he get in with his club,
Old Nep will surely loose a sub ;
He cannot though, so takes to drink,
And soon has but a sightless wink ;
For, as he snores within his cave,
I see Ulysses—cunning knave—
With forky stick his eyeball tear,
And leave him groaning in despair,

But now, behind a shining bar,
Sly Circe passes round three-star,
And carries on with ocean swells
Like *up-to-business* tavern belles,
For over graciously she leans
To boldly mash the Johnny Greens ;
While one—the dandy of the crowd—
Cracks broadest jokes in accents loud,
And paws her bust and fool's around,
Till fully “on the bust” he's found ;
Then treats his friends and drinks till he
Is fitted for a piggery,

An asinine, maudlin link between.
A monkey and a swine obscene.

But who are they who in the pit
And lower boxes dimly sit ?
Why, as I live, they're mortals queer !
But who or what I'm not too clear ;
For every garb beneath the sun,
To that before e'en dress begun
To latest fashions—all are there.
Ah ! ah ! I know them I declare !
And so I hail in accents loud,
“ Ahoy, there, *Davy Jones's crowd* !”

But at my shout, like flash of light,
The pageant vanishes from sight ;
And Mr. Buntline growls, “ Look here,
To Blanket Bay you'd better sheer,
Or next thing overboard you'll go !
If sleep you must, just sleep below,”
Then adds, in accents ever gruff,
“ Of *phosphorous* you'll have enough,
And blazing hot, I'm thinking, when
Old ‘ Davey ’ gets you in his den !”

I merely hint that he will be
A comrade kind to comfort me ;
Then dive below to try again
My hammock, like the sailor-men ;
When, cast away on dreamland's coast,
I sup with Neptune for a host ;

Then, sailing off to Circe's isle,
 Soon carry on in masher style.
 But as I spoon and gaily quaff,
 I change my shape and hear a laugh,
 While someone says, " My music might
 A herd of *other* swine delight !"
 And, by-the-by, the vanished thing
Was like a *pig upon* the wing !
 Now, readers, if this tale should test
 Your credence turnpike never rest,
 Till, sailing on the ocean free,
 You may perhaps those high jinks see ;
 But mind, be prudent when you do,
 Or vanish with that phantom crew !

Ship Carnaqueen, May, 1877.



THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

A LEGEND OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

INTRODUCTION.

Come listen to this truthful tale a mariner told me
 About the most pig-headed tar that ever sailed the sea :
 None of your footlight singing swells—tenori, say, for
 choice,
 But just the biggest whale for rum, and *blessed* with fog-
 horn voice,

Who, wind-jammed off the "Stormy Cape," swore he would
not "*up stick*,"

And sold his soul, as seamen will, to Davey Jones—that's
Nick ;

Thereafter to be played by him, as you would lusty fish,
For swarms of hungry imps at last to be the toughest dish :
Let opera Wagnerian delight the Upper Ten,
We'll have the Vanderdecken yarn as known to sailor men.

THE MARINER'S STORY.

Some centuries ago or so—I will not be precise—
A fine, old-fashioned galliot, which looked just like a slice
From Daddy Noah's clipper craft (a bottom slice, of course),
With lots of beam to carry sail, was thrashing at the force
Of snoring gale from sou'-sou'-east and nasty chopping sea,
As lively as she bobbed about as such a craft could be ;
And on the weather-quarter loomed old Afric's stormy cape,
Round which the Dutch adventurer his daring course would
shape ;

For "Vanderdecken," of that craft, was skipper bold I ween,
As anyone with half an eye might easily have seen ;
For, speaking trumpet in his hand, he looked as if he'd hail
The natives swart of savage land above the roaring gale.

An oiled sou'-wester cased his head above his shaggy brows—
Who'd ever think that bear-like man once fancied by the
vrows ?

For like a rat, he'd keen small eyes, and then his bottle-nose

Had pimples of the pineapple, the colours of the rose ;
While wolf-like mouth, with yellow teeth, which snarled
beneath that knob,

Appeared as if on offer there to take a mantrap's job ;
His grizzled beard from heavy chin on brawny breast hung
down

To fairly mix the grime and grease upon his doublet brown,
And in the girdle that he wore was thrust a dagger long,
To prove its owner in the right, however in the wrong.
Trunk hose of leather met his boots of close-grained, hard
horse-hide,

Which on the luckless Johann Schmidt full often had been
tried,

Who, though he doubtless fancied them *too large* a size or
so,

Discovered that, like "three-leagued boots," they made him
swiftly go ;

And once, when with great energy and suddenness applied,
They furnished wings which carried him into the sea's salt
tide,

Where, being but an orphan boy of melancholy mood,
They left him there to fraternise with "Mother Carey's"
brood.

But, oh ! as if into the breast of Stormy Petrel small
Had entered soul of cabin-boy, so, surely in each squall,
One pretty, evil-omened bird on restless wings pursued
With other notions, said the men, than just to seek for
food ;

“For gramercy ! right well he knows,” quoth they, “how we
shall fare,

And so, to keep us company, already doth prepare,
For since the little Johann died hath trouble hemmed us
round,

And will, till in the fatal sea like him shall we be drowned.”
So biscuit crumbs some to him threw, while others wished
that he

To “certain burning latitudes” might on swift pinions flee !
Still, howsoever they might wish, there still that seabird flew,
That troubled Vanderdecken more than e’er it did his crew,
And often, with his arquebus, had he, with cruel mind,
At little ocean wanderer aimed messenger unkind ;
But, oh, a charmed life it bore, for still it sailed along,
As if it loved the billow’s crest and tempest’s weird song.

That stormy petrel skimmed the waves on restless pinions
light,

A hated and reproachful thing in Vanderdecken’s sight,
Who, as he rolled along his deck, no words of pleasure
spoke,

Though muttered curses from his throat in sullen thunder
broke ;

And, scowling on his sun-burnt crew, from foremast-man to
mate,

He “blessings” in Low Dutch called down on every luck-
less pate,

As if those scurvy-stricken tars could help the gale so foul,
Which in derision through the gear like demons seemed to
howl.

“Come, rouse that fore-tack down,” he cried ; “be smart,
ye lubbers all !”

And half a dozen tarry ones responded to his call,
While, just as sportive rabbits drive into rude dingle dens,
So dived into the seething trough the “Renaud Engle-
kens,”

For thus was Vanderdecken’s craft from burgomaster
named,

Who little thought when she was launched that she would
be so famed.

Now, Peter Vanderbelt, the mate, a fair-haired, blue-eyed
tar,

Is gazing with his mental eye upon some scene afar ;
For, as against a shroud he leans, his heart is far away—
To where his loving Gretchen sits, while round the children
play,

And in his ears their joyous tones like music seem to ring ;
But him from his bright reverie his skipper’s accents bring.
“Arouse ye ! dreaming, home-sick calf !” he hears that
worthy hiss ;

“Ere Amsterdam ye see again it will be long I wis ;
For may Old Scratch seize on my soul if I for Holland turn
Before we weather yon black cape and leave it far astern.
For spice and precious stones I sailed, and mean to have
them too,

And so I’ll stay and carry on till everything is blue !

Besides, I never yet was beat wherever I did roam.

Go ! get below, you foolish loon, and dream no more of
home !”

But, ah ! what fearsome sound was that which both those
seamen heard ?

It could not come from albatross or any other bird,
Though round them rustled viewless wings, and weird
shadows fell—

Oh, no, 'twas like exulting laugh from mocking fiend of hell !
And, with a sudden change of wind, the sails were thrown
aback,

And stopped the “ Renaud Englekens ” abruptly in her
track ;

But e'er the startled seamen sprang to haul the yards around,
She filled again and gathered way, as if for Cape Horn bound.
But where is gallant Vanderbelt ? Not in his berth below.
No pillow, save a “ water one,” will Peter ever know ;
For, by the jibbing main-boom flung into the raging sea,
No more will he his pleasant home or gentle Gretchen see :
With one wild cry to Heaven sent for mercy on his soul,
He disappears beneath the waves, which o'er him surging
roll.

E'en Vanderdecken's rugged heart by tragedy was wrung,
For still he loved his sister's son—though he no hencoop
flung,

Or wore his clumsy galliot, or tried to heave her to,
Or in a cranky cockle-shell send forth a saving crew ;
For well he knew that fruitless all would such endeavours be ;
No dingey that was ever launched could live in such a sea ;
Besides, he saw his luckless mate like deep-sea lead go
down,

So turned upon the steersman bold with savage curse and
frown—

“Just mind your helm, you lubber, you ! Why, what are you about ?

I did not want, you sea-cook’s son, to put the craft about,
And ’twas *your* carelessness just now that got her in the wind,

And sent poor Peter overboard. By himmel, I’m inclined
To string you up, without a shrift, unto that yardarm there !”
The man replied, “Thou skipper mine, from further threats
forbear ;

No fault was that of mortal man, but of the Evil One,
Who works for us a cruel fate which he hath well begun ;
For, oh ! that horrid, gibing laugh rings yet within mine ears,
And ever will, though I attain to all one hundred years.
A doomed ship is this, I trow, and all that in her sail ;
That fatal cape we’ll never round or weather out this gale.
But I for one, like Christian man, will bravely meet my fate ;
I would I were as well prepared as our departed mate !
For gentle was his soul, I wis, though as a lion’s bold”—
And, as thus spake that mariner, tears down his visage
rolled—

“’Tis thirty days since first in sight of that swart cape we
came,

And high upon the inland hills beheld the nightly flame,
Which you said native blackamoors were making as a sign—
An ugly blackamoor, indeed, thought I and comrades mine !
And still a foul wind baffles us, while scurvy thins the crew ;
Then list, mynheer, to good advice I fain would offer you.”

Stern Vanderdecken answered not, but turned him on his
heel,

Though into his hard, wicked heart a doubt began to steal,

And as he wandered up and down on those unsteady planks,
Old recollections filled his mind of what were worse than
pranks ;

And then he mused on Vanderbelt, when—who would
think it true—

Unconsciously from his fierce eyes stole down a tear or two !
For his good angel tried once more to turn his stubborn
heart—

That indurated pebble-stone which stood for vital part—

And prompted him to seek again his helmsman good and
true,

And growl, “ Now, Diedrich, say thy say, but let thy words
be few.”

Then spake that skilful mariner, and this is what he said,
“ Turn back, if there should yet be time, by prudent coun-
sels led,

And let us to Our Lady pray to help us in our strait,
For with her aid, perchance, e’en yet may we evade our
fate.”

Here Vanderdecken stopped him short, with muttered curse
and scowl :

Quoth he, “ Befits it seamen bold to helpless saints to howl
Whene’er a puff of wind comes down and starts a wave or
two ?

Pshaw ! if you call *that* good advice, just *clew up* !—that
will do.”

E’en as bold Vanderdecken spoke that stormy wind veered
round,

And seemingly the Englekens was fairly outward bound.

Then muttered that grim skipper old, as they the yards did trim,

“Not yet hath Satan clutched my soul ; I still will weather him.

Ho, steward ! bring the cheering schnapps ! Let all the mainbrace splice !”

The steward said not anything, but vanished in a trice,
And soon each drouthy mariner tossed high the polished horn,

Then poured into their seasoned throats the blood of Barley-corn.

E'en Diedrich took his liquor off as should a seaman brave,
But still it lightened not his heart or cleared his visage grave ;
And, when a comrade to the helm came aft his trick to take,
He gave the tiller up to him and gazed back on the wake,
As if the mate once more he'd see, then crossed himself and sighed,

While offering a prayer for him who slept beneath the tide ;
Then forward to the forecastle he silently did hie,
For something whispered in his ear 'twould soon be his to die.

Now merrily the galliot runs right before the wind,
And wildly yaws, as is the wont of vessels of her kind,
While albatross and moleymauks and flocks of smaller fry
On buoyant wings wheel round and round, to keep an eager eye

On white and boiling wake astern for what the cook may cast,

While through the rigging whistles shrill the mighty western blast,

And from the huge green-headed waves, with gleaming crests
of spray,

A school of uncouth black fish dive in strange cetacean
play.

Then Vanderdecken goes below to take another nip,
Forgetting quite the adage old anent impending slip
'Twixt cup and lip, although before, unto his cost, hath he
Oft verified the truth of it upon that very sea.

And, hark ! that heavy tramp of feet denotes a stir on deck,
So quickly up the booby-hatch he cranes his bull-like neck,
To see the yards braced round again to meet the gale
unkind,

For, hauled upon a bowline taut, she's close upon a wind.
Ah ! now she will not lie her course, unless they wish to land
At Table Bay, and soon e'en that is on their weather hand ;
And, blowing as 'twould blow its last, the fast-increasing gale
Soon forces Vanderdecken bold to take in sail by sail,
And though his craft " lies to like duck " in ordinary gales,
There's nothing now would stand to it unless sheet-iron sails ;
She therefore needs must scud away beneath her long bare
poles,

While, with her yard-arms to the brine, 'midst horrid waves
she rolls ;

And as the night comes rushing down upon the stormy sea,
E'en Vanderdecken would he were beneath some island's lee.

How fiercely that south-easter blows, so piercing, dry, and
chill,

And stars with cruel, steel-like gleam the cloudless heavens
fill,

'Neath which the sailless vessel speeds—one instant tossed
on high
On mountain seas, whose wind-shorn crests like stinging
hailstones fly,
Then hurled to seething, gloomy depths, by rushing waves
assailed.
No wonder that upon their knees the fear-cowed seamen
quailed,
And prayed unto their patron saints for help in this their
strait :
These might have heard, but if they did they left them to
their fate ;
For hark ! as yaws the Englekens, an awful billow breaks
With force terrific on the craft, which to her keelson shakes
Beneath the shock ; it smashes in her hatches, as a bomb
Descending through some dwelling's roof would carry wreck
and doom ;
And down into her gloomy hold invading waters pour
In torrents like Niagara, and with a sullen roar.

Bold Diedrich and the watch below dart out upon the deck,
While scurvy-stricken wretches pray and moan a certain
wreck ;
And well they may, for overboard the helmsmen twain are
cast,
Their dying cries to leeward borne upon the raging blast.
And Vanderdecken, where is he ? Why, on the cabin floor,
As full of schnapps as he can be and has been oft before.
The tiller and the binnacle both gone, with helmsmen brave !
No wonder that the boldest now expect an ocean grave !

And e'er brave Diedrich can invent, and with the hardy crew
Rig up, some *pro tem* steering-gear, the vessel broaches to,
And by the wind's terrific force is thrown upon her beam,
While through the hatchway's gaping jaws the fatal waters
stream.

In vain those active mariners, with ready jack-knives bound,
To hack the weather lanyards tough, through rigging's dead-
eyes wound ;

For, with a suffocating sob, she rights a moment, then
Dives down into the depths below with all her doomed men,
Whose death-shrieks, ringing wild and shrill, one moment
peal on high ;

Then naught is left, save raging waves, beneath the cruel sky !

AFTER.

From out the peaceful ocean deeps
The ghost of Vanderdecken
Arose, with phantom crew, and keeps
On cruising round, I reckon,
In cobweb craft that eats the wind
Right into very eye, sir,
When darksome nights and gales unkind
Poor modern shellbacks try, sir.

The look-out man he roars "Sail, ho !"
Then whispers, "Oh, my eye, Jack,
If this here ain't a rummy go,
May I to Poll ne'er go back !

She's comin' up right head to wind,
 No rag o' cloth a-showin',
 An' if their helum they don't mind
 Slap through 'em we'll be goin ! ”

“ 'Tis Vanderdecken cruising round,
 On Davey Jones attending ;
 And those who see him, if not drowned,
 All come to still worse ending ! ”
 “ A paul heave on that cuffer, Jack :
 Of lies 'tis just a parcel ;
 Besides, that ship on tother tack
 Is Smith's Balmoral Castle ! ”



TO A SWALLOW

That came to the ship and lighted on my wife's head when we were
 in the Western Ocean, four hundred miles from land.

Poor wanderer ! what dost thou here,
 With weary wings and eyes of fear,
 From land so far away ?
 For over hedgerow, mead, and stream,
 And gardens, whence sweet flowerets gleam,
 Thou should'st be skimming gay.

Thy comrades twitter 'neath the eaves
 Of human friends, the verdant leaves
 Are singing to the wind.

The swarming gnats whirl high in air,
Of swallows aye the dainty fare :
 Why left thou them behind ?

O'er ocean yet the norther blows,
Chill-hearted, from eternal snows ;
 The petrels* vagrant train
Flit lightly in our vessel's wake,
With eager appetite to take
 The floatage of the main.

From "Stormy Cape," through cold and heat,
In ocean's waves they've dipped their feet,
 And followed day and night ;
But thou, though similar in form,
When worsted by the cruel storm,
 Where, where couldst thou alight ?

Right welcome wouldst thou be if I
Knew not that thou must surely die
 Of hunger, friendly bird ;
For nothing can we offer thee
As provender—upon the sea
 No buzzing fly is heard.

My children laugh with ringing glee
Thy charming confidence to see,
 As folding pinions light,

* The name petrel is derived from the Italian diminutive for Peter, *i.e.*, "Petrillo," and was given to the petrel owing to its habit of dipping its feet into the waves as it skims along their surface, as Peter dipped his feet when attempting to follow our Saviour's example on the Sea of Gennesaret.

By instinct to the gentle led,
Thou perchest on their mother's head
To rest awhile from flight.

There, pretty creature, stay awhile,
Then haste away, lest mouser vile
Should mark thee as his prey.
Thy speedy pinions yet may bear
Thee safely through the bracing air
O'er Biscay's stormy bay

To sunny France, where thou wouldst find
A welcome, doubtless, from thy kind.
Now seek the rigging high,
In safety there to rest until
The morrow's sun gilds far-off hill,
Then landward swiftly fly.

Ship Carnaqueen, May 28, 1877.



THE SWALLOW'S FATE.

Departed is the chilly wind,
The waves have sunk to rest,
And cheerily upon mankind
That jewel of the all-wise mind—
The sun—in glory dressed,

Flames upward to the eastern sky
In chariot of light ;
The morning air is crisp and dry,
While wavelets small that ripple by
As emeralds are bright.

The canvas flutters as the ship
Is rocked by rolling swell,
Which chronicles, with sighing lip,
The fury of the storm king's whip
That late on ocean fell.

Too tranquil is the smiling morn
For gallant, home-sick tars,
Who would from waves the foam was torn
By mighty western wind in scorn,
And bowed their lofty spars.

“ Now, swallow, is the time for flight,”
I, upward gazing, said ;
But never swallow met my sight,
And so I pictured with delight
The wanderer safely sped ;

Then, slowly pacing to and fro,
I eastward turned my eyes,
When, ah ! a dreadful cry of woe—
Loud children's sorrow from below—
Rang upward to the skies.

“ The birdie’s dead ! the birdie’s dead ! ”

Poor Tottie cried in grief ;
And so it was, for fate had led
The swallow near that tabby dread—
Our skulking feline thief.

At eventide no more ’twould roam
Beneath the summer sky
O’er many a happy English home ;
For, oh, across the ocean’s foam
It sought us but to die.

Ship Carnaqueen, May 29, 1877.

Poor little swallow ! I thought that it was gone off safely, but after passing the night in the cook’s galley it fluttered aft into the cabin, when to the bitter grief of the children, the weird (St. Helena) successor of the “phosphorous hunter,” imitating the *rôle* of the detestable prowler which slew “Mrs. Throgmorton’s bullfinch,” pounced in and burked it; but we did not permit him to feast on the fruit of his crime. No; we committed it to the deep, while that feline exhibited to perfection what a cat, duly encouraged, can perform in the way of flying up precipitous places and through impossible cracks, in which a November sunbeam would share the fate *Æsop’s* weasel. He did not, however, follow his victim overboard, owing to the insignificant fact that no one was able to capture him in time to draw his attention to it; besides, *reason* stepped in to the rescue, and averred that the culprit was *naturally* vicious, and therefore not accountable for his crimes. He was let off, but has since been shy.



TO AN EAST WIND.

IN THE CHOPS OF THE CHANNEL.

Some poets rail at Boreas,
Averring he's a railer,
But stubborn *east winds* bore, alas !
Far more the home-sick sailor,
When round about the universe
He's weary months been sailing,
That wind and soundings he'll asperse
With fervour unavailing.

From Channel chops, like albatross,
Glide lofty outward-bounders,
While, with that east wind for a boss,
Athwart them thrash our sounders,
Who, sniffing, scent fresh provender,
Kiss almost Nance and Polly,
Yet from *these chops* they cannot stir,
To kiss which would be folly.

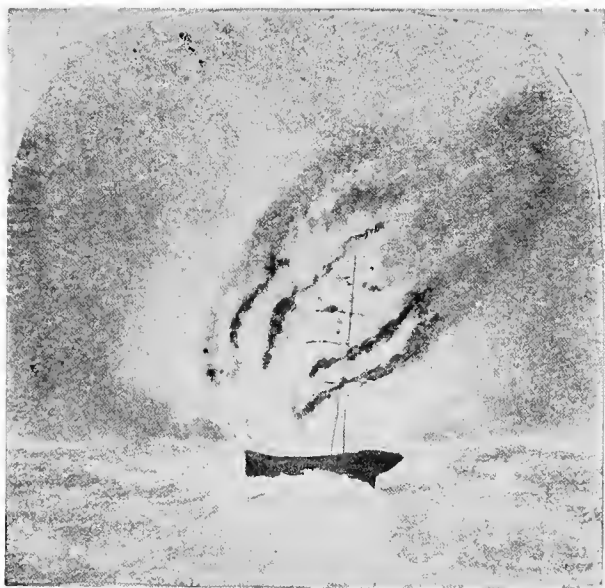
Swift in-bound steamers, gallantly
The foaming billows cleaving,
Can almost hear our "Hard-a-lee,"
And shellbacks loudly grieving.
Our canvas thunders in the wind,
As round she comes all shaking—
No *missing stays*—she's more inclined
To be a *long stay* making !

With reddish nose and pearly eyes,
Our officers go pacing,
Obtesting aye the cruel skies,
Whose wind is far too *bracing* ;
For *bowline* is a word, oh dear !
Our skipper's always calling,
While " Mainsail haul ! " e'en now I hear
Him up above me bawling.

Dull patience is an attribute
Confined, 'tis said, to females ;
That statement I at once confute
By swearing that all sea males
Must take to it, like Adam's race
To death—that's willy-nilly,
When east winds they with *bad* damns face
But *then* they're close on S(c)illy.

Of sharks and whales, of calms and gales,
We've had enough, Old Gusty,
So long to lounge in smiling vales,
And rattle on roads dusty.
Vouchsafe us, then, a friendly lift
To stop this ceaseless tacking :
Our wardrobe's done ; a decent shift
Of wind we're sadly lacking.

Great Æolus, thy burly sub,
Old Boreas, be sending
To kick home this vile, surly cub,
Now Neptune's sons offending.



Drawn by R. Bruce.

THE BURNING OF THE COSPATRICK.

In sounding cave confine the knave
 Till "outward bound" *we're* steering;
 Then let him free to sweep the sea,
 And work at Channel clearing.

With sails all squared we'll gaily grin
 At nasty, growling fellows,
 Who'd to the Downs go sailing in,
 And ban your howling bellows
 For kindly helping us along
 (A salt's a selfish rogue as
 Those Ministers who change their song
 To suit their oft-turned togas).

Ship Carnaqueen, 1877.



THE BURNING OF THE COSPATRICK.

At midnight of November 17th, 1874, when about 400 miles from the Cape, the Cospatrick, bound for Auckland, with 434 passengers and a crew of 43 hands, was found to be on fire, which, despite all efforts to subdue it, obtained an entire mastery and raged in the vessel till she sank. Only two boats finally left the burning ship. One, after keeping in company with the other, disappeared, and was never afterwards heard of; the other, with *five* men, out of thirty-five who started in her, was picked up by the ship British Sceptre on the 27th, and of these two died after being taken on board. When writing the poem, I was most careful to glean information from the best available sources, and I believe my description of the terrible maritime calamity is as nearly correct as it is possible to be.—R. B.

The orb of day has disappeared from sight
 Beyond horizon's far-off western verge,
 While summer zephyrs, vagrant-winged and light,
 Stir waste of waters that has ceased to surge,

Since loud-voiced storm king laid aside his scourge ;
Yet rolling swells unquietly arise,
Like late-quelled rioters a word would urge
Again to violence, but tranquil skies
A peaceful night portend, and twilight swiftly dies.

But not on ocean's vast expanse descends
The gloomy darkness of cloud-curtained night ;
For, sailing high, the earth's fair consort lends
A silver flood of soft, reflected light,
Which soothes the senses and the hearts delight
Of cheery voyagers, who o'er the deep
Send tuneful melodies, now sad, now bright,
With words of hope to bid the pulses leap,
Or plaintive ballads old might force the blithe to weep.

For now of emigrants a motley throng
The good ship brings from Britain's islands twain,
Who speed the moments pleasantly with song,
While idly rocking on the restless main,
Far, far from homes they ne'er may see again ;
For, oh ! the laugh and sportive jest go round,
While they to fancy lend a loosened rein,
And see themselves to certain fortune bound
On sunny southern shores where liberty is found.

But brazen clang of slowly-smitten bell
On pure air vibrates, resonant and clear,
Apprising all, as many think too well,
That evening "dog watch" to the crew so dear

Is but a memory ; and soon to steer
A man steps aft ; when comrade he relieves,
Imparts the course to his attentive ear,
And *gossip* also, as he slowly leaves,
With added subtle hint that meaning gesture weaves.

By bowsprit heel the trusty look-out man
The deck patrols with light, well-balanced tread,
To pause at times the vessel's path to scan
For hidden dangers that may lurk ahead
In coming ship or floating wreck more dread,
While comrades rough, of watch on deck, bestow
Themselves around where'er by fancy led
In friendly knots, to talk in voices low,
No just offence to give to sleeping watch below.

From placid loveliness of balmy night
The yawning voyagers retire to sleep ;
Though some remain to watch deceptive light
Enhance the seeming of a *living* deep,
And shining eyes of phosphorous that peep
From fretwork patches of white, gleaming spray
Evolved from waves which 'gainst the good^d ship leap,
Then sullen fall, and leave to pass away
In ghostly wake astern their bursting bubbles gray.

Of Southern Cross the pointers slowly turn,
While careful officer the poop must pace
To con the sails, and with *wet finger* learn
Whence come faint airs which fail to fan his face ;

And oftentimes he calls his men to brace
Round creaking yards to meet uncertain wind,
When they, not differing from all the race,
Cry "Aye, aye, sir!" yet wish him dead or blind,
In muttered, surly phrase uncouth as 'tis unkind.

Thus they on deck, while heedless folks below
In darksome berths, are now beneath the spell
Of gentle sleep—the sweetest mortals know,
When undisturbed by fevered visions fell,
As Adam's race with gratitude can tell ;
And these, all confident in ship and crew,
Dream not of fear, but slumber sound and well,
For brightly tinted are their hopes in hue,
And fair the pictured paths that open to their view.

They little heed the wash against the bends,
The bell's loud stroke, and heavy roller's shock,
Or on the deck the clatter of ropes' ends,
Or fretful banging of a tackle block,
The creaking fittings, or the vessel's rock ;
Nor are they startled by the seamen's tread,
Which hollow-sounding slumber seems to mock,
Yet in reality but serves instead
To summon dreamland sprites to sport round pillowed
head :

For restless brains, ignoring sleep's control,
Have visions strange, as Pharaoh did of old,
Which wizard fancy, artist of the soul,
With magic pencil draws in outlines bold

To please hot youth and those whose veins wax cold :
The past, the present, and the future bring
A medley strange of subjects, else untold,
To crowd his canvas—mirth on glancing wing,
And guilt and trouble, too, their subjects freely fling.

The young, strong man, with health and courage blessed,
Who feels not yet the force of time's fell hand,
But entertains a Briton's wholesome zest
For scenes exciting, strides on far-off strand,
Or breasts the flood, or views his well-tilled land ;
On gallant steed outstrips the bushland flame,
Or singly combats with some savage band,
Sees beauty his, grasps opulence and fame,
And is the winner sure in life's swift-changing game.

The buxom lass, her red cheek on her arm,
Meets once again the lover left behind ;
Or better still (O dream a maid to charm)
One rich and handsome she will shortly find,
Should Fortune's smiles to her be truly kind ;
Gay scenes of pleasure, dresses rich and bright,
All these combine to fill with joy her mind ;
Let anxious cares assail with morning's light—
She hath fair visions now to charm her mental sight.

E'en tender infant by its mother's side
Hath shadow dreams to stir its slumbers deep,
For soft lips work, as if they draw the tide
Which baby life can in such pleasure steep,

And aid to lull the little one to sleep ;
Faint wreathing smiles play o'er its dimpled face ;
Its rosy limbs from 'neath the bedding peep ;
And, surely, o'er it from the Throne of Grace
A guardian angel stands and keeps its resting place..

Of southern night 'tis now the peaceful noon,
And " Rouse, you sleepers ! " and the clang of bell
Bring watch below again on deck, and soon
Their weary shipmates, deeming all is well,
Turn in to rest for brief, allotted spell ;
While hardy deck watch, yawning as they go,
Seek cosy nooks in which salt yarns to tell,
And puff the weed, while time with pinions slow
Pursues his endless race, and dreamers dream below..

An aged man from Erin's luckless isle
By fearful vision is constrained to weep ;
For, ah ! 'midst concourse of masked monsters vile
He* stands perforce, while they a circle keep
Round lonely cot, whence half-clad creatures leap
To 'scape the flames which red-winged soar on high,
The brooding clouds with glare of hell to steep.
Oh, God ! those fiends ! they hurl them back to die—
Too great grim horror's strain—he wakes with startled cry..

* An old Tipperary man told me that in the time of the " White Boys " he witnessed such a scene as here portrayed to his great horror ; in fact, that he and several others were forced to stay in order that they would not dare to give the names of the others.—R. B.

What pungent odour steals from hold below,
With vicious hiss and rustle as of snake ?
Alas ! it tells of fierce, relentless foe,
And luckless sleepers in confusion wake,
At very name of enemy to quake :
“ *Fire ! Fire !* ” they cry in shrillest tones of fright,
For will not Death now gather in his stake
On boundless ocean, and in dead of night,
With fire and flood combined to aid him with their
might ?

The boldest don what garments they may find,
The women clutch their little ones and shriek,
While crew and captain, as one man combined,
The common foe in lurking places seek
With steadfast purpose, but with blanching cheek ;
For, oh ! on sails and tarry cordage fed,
It gathers force and rushes forth to wreak
A swift destruction on each hapless head,
So lately laid in peace on pillow void of dread,

The mariners a forceful deluge send ;
In hissing steam the red flames fling it back
Through open hatchway with the mists to blend,
And pass to leeward with the heavy rack
Of blinding smoke that rolls in volumes black ;
While raging foe, all hydra-headed, flies
On seamen bold to frustrate their attack,
Like famished lion, which, with blazing eyes,
Beats back the hunter band and bears off one as prize.

Distracted women to the workers cling,
Or screaming children to their bosoms fold,
While brawny men in desperation fling
The ocean water to the burning hold,
Till bravest hearts grow paralyzed and cold,
For vainly all their failing force they try ;
The bounding flames beat back those toilers bold
With burning wounds, and then exultant fly
The foremost boats to claim, and climb the rigging high.

The fated ship, now head to wind, sweeps round,
When lofty foremast falls with horrid crash,
Like forest king dashed headlong to the ground
By awful lightning's devastating flash,
And fear-struck people to the small boats dash ;
But overcrowding, by fell panic driven,
Men pile on men till massive davits smash,
And ocean's breast by frenzied forms is riven,
Whose awful cries for help assail unheeding Heaven.

For though the meanest sparrow may not fall
Without *His* knowledge, when man's time is come
He must obey the Conqueror of all—
The prayerful e'en as obstinately dumb,
And so those lost ones to their fate succumb :
'Tis Nature's law, and she, with stony gaze,
Sees Death's dread grasp the human heart benumb.
"He will be missed" is but an empty phrase :
A passing atom-man, of varied length of days !

Now gallant Lewis and McDonald try
The ship's great pinnacle on the skids to turn,
But no one answers their imploring cry
For needful help ; 'tis therefore left to burn,
And eager flames soon spread from stem to stern ;
To lower then from handy davits near
Its buoyant burthen is their chief concern,
While others, not yet overcome by fear,
The brine-filled boat secure and quickly bale her clear.

From haggard crowd that fiercely surges there
A stream of fugitives down tackles slide,
Or, stung to madness by their sharp despair,
Spring wildly forth from lofty vessel's side
To board the boats from corpse-encumbered tide ;
Till, presently, when crowded to excess,
The crews push off and from the swimmers glide,
For now, all impotent in vast distress,
Their meagre chance of life each moment renders less.

On doomed ship the fast-encroaching pest
From decks and hatchways leaps toward the sky,
And soon by e'en the bravest 'tis confessed
That naught remains for any but to die,
And shrieks and prayers go up in one wild cry ;
But now to falling mainmast's thunders dread
The awful groans of victims make reply,
With wailings shrill of whirling flames o'erhead,
Which light with lurid glare the dying and the dead.

The crowded boats are heaving on the deep,
While shrieks resound and death and horror reign
For flame-scorched wretches from that red hell leap
To 'scape from torture in consenting main,
When earthly hope they realise is vain.
Now, wife in arms, the captain courts the wave,
Through kindly agency new life to gain ;
And, with their child, the doctor, calmly brave,
Oblivion's flood explores and shares their ocean grave.

How paramount the love of life must be
When men sit selfishly, while all around
Their hapless friends are sinking in the sea,
With cries for help, yet, lacking aid, are drowned !
If now for them no saving ark be found,
Do they not think that they may well die too,
And pass away, by conscience justly crowned,
Than live indeed, yet evermore to view
By day and night in thought that lost, beseeching crew ?

The mizenmast falls headlong with a crash,
And ocean trembles to concussion dread,
While from the ship, with sudden roar and flash,
The stern blows out, and soon the flames are spread
O'er all the vessel, for, by spirit* fed,
They mount on high with mighty whirlwind roar,
And in their midst the last sad souls are sped :
From clay divorced, away to swiftly soar,
Their Master's will to work—ah ! where ?—for evermore.

* The Cospatrick had a very large consignment of spirits on board.—R. B

The hull floats on, infested by fierce fire,
 Which gnaws its vitals, while huge jets of steam,
 With angry hiss, above the flames aspire,
 When shattered stern admits a briny stream,
 Or floods, invading, pour through ports abeam.
 Now, one by one, the swimmers strong go down,
 And men drop off from floating coop or beam,
 With choking cry beneath the waves to drown,
 Each fear-wrung visage pale fast settling in a frown.

Near flaming wreck, with miserable freight
 Of human salvage, those small ship's boats lie,
 When fair Aurora opens wide the gate
 For pale-browed morning in the eastern sky,
 And far and wide the seamen's glances fly
 In eager hope that some tall, saving ship,
 Approaching slowly, may delight the eye :
 All gaze in vain, with indrawn breath and lip—
 They see but ocean birds, that in its waters dip.

Now, as the cutter has no chief to guide
 Her fateful course and helpless landmen crew,
 The brave McDonald, oft in tempests tried,
 That post assumes, while from him take their cue
 Young Bentley brave and Lewis good and true ;
 Staunch seamen all, who, though without a sail
 Or compass guide, with haven far from view,
 May, with kind Providence, reverse the scale
 'Gainst famine-gnawing tooth and ocean's ruthless gale.

The hours creep on, the sun resigns his reign,
And weary night's long vigils, too, are passed,
When o'er the limitless expanse again
The morning breaks, more hopeless than the last ;
For, though all night the wreck's red beacon cast
Its warning light far o'er the lonely sea,
No swelling sail, no lofty, taper mast
In spreading circle of their sight they see,
And from their sinking hearts e'en hope begins to flee.

The second day is waning fast, when lo !
The calcined hull sends up vast clouds of steam,
As, plunging headlong, down she dives below,
And through the brine her red-hot ruins gleam,
While requiem wild the startled sea birds scream ;
Then rushing waters in the vortex meet,
And fiercely fighting for the plunder seem,
Till, rolling onward in their heedless beat,
They count one good ship more to ocean's sunken fleet.

On varied hamper which around them floats
The shipwrecked gaze, then shape their hopeless course-
Sans everything, in those deep-laden boats,
With scarce an oar their weary way to force ;
But brave McDonald as a faint resource
A garment spreads, that some poor maiden lends,
To form a sail ; this probably the source
In careless times of ribaldry, now tends
To raise fresh hopes of life as their frail mast it bends.

They onward drift the livelong silent night,
 'The moon's reflection silvering the deep,
And while for succour some few strain their sight,
 The rest, o'erwearied, sink in troubled sleep,
 And luckless women in the mate's boat weep.
Up mounts the sun, but ocean's breast again
 No sail can show to bid their hearts to leap,
While Nature's cravings fast augment their pain.
Oh for the crust despised, the gently falling rain !

Another day is numbered with the past,
 Another night, and still another day ;
Then wakes to violence the western blast,
 Whose fierce behest the rolling waves obey,
 And rush before it in the moonlight grey :
On, on they speed, those gaunt and wasted forms,
 Who little heed the crested billows play,
For once again the hope each bosom warms
That they a ship may meet, or reach the Cape of Storms.

Now foaming chaos they may scan in vain,
 For consort boat has disappeared from sight,
And loudest hail brings back no hail again
 To give them answer through the thickening night,
 O'er angry surges, gleaming crisply white ;
They onward scud, while in each breast of care
 The feeling gathers that the weary fight
With gnawing hunger, thirst, and deep despair,
Uncheered must henceforth be, alone for them to bear !

The Sabbath dawns—no peaceful time of rest ;
What day it is none scarcely know or care,
For while they watch each coming roller's crest
Their every thought converges to despair,
And thirst becomes impossible to bear :
Now reckless grown and deaf to counsels given,
They drink from ocean, though its waters tear
Their very vitals, till by madness driven
They curse the hand of fate, and rave of hell and heaven.

From earthly agony their souls depart,
And leave to prowlers of the sea a prey :
Poor Bently, steering, leaps with sudden start
From fevered doze, and, falling, drifts away ;
His comrades see, but cannot for him stay.
On, on they drive, while, like fierce lupine pack
O'er dreary waste sad fugitives to slay,
The raging billows follow on their track,
And o'er the gunwales bound to be baled hardly back.

Still howls the gale, and by fierce hunger driven
The ghoul-like living feed upon the dead ;
For human qualms from voyagers are riven
Who now *must* die if not on something fed,
And nought is there save husks of spirits fled ;
But they are many, for each awful day
Finds Death fresh victims, whose warm veins are bled
To keep in life the few who still obey
Starvation's promptings grim its horrid pangs to stay.

When coldly breaks the widely spreading dawn
Of eighth sad morning from the shades of night,
To eager vision of those waifs forlorn
Is now revealed a soul-reviving sight—
A barque, full sail, before the breezes light !
To be observed, their every art employs
Those wretched castaways ; but, like a blight,
Fell disappointment transient joy destroys—
That heedless craft speeds on. None hear their faint
 ahoys.

What sickening agony the lost ones feel
As speedy stranger on her voyage steers !
In speechless misery their senses reel,
And dry are fountains of relieving tears,
Though gloomy depths of death's black gulf appears
To yawn before them ; but brave Lewis now
This homely comfort whispers in their ears :
“ Come, cheer up, comrades, let that vessel go ;
We'll sight another soon ; we're in their track I know.”

•
Nine dreary nights, nine weary days are flown,
And drifting still is ark of horrors, where
The mangled dead are 'midst the living strewn ;
For crouching near, like wild beasts in their lair,
Are gaunt survivors who no longer care
For life or death, but 'neath the cold grey skies
In sleep recline, or round them madly glare
On ghastly comrades with ferocious eyes,
Till, like a rabid dog, one on McDonald flies

And bites his flesh, when, starting from a trance,
He feebly rises to repel his foe ;
But, ah ! what meets his eager, searching glance,
And bids new hope within his breast to grow ?—
A noble ship ! He tries to shout “ Sail ho ! ”
Yet breathlessly to cutter’s gunwale clings,
And gazes mutely on the gallant show
The craft displays, with wide and lofty wings,
While o’er the crested waves her captain’s hoarse hail sings.

The gaunt survivors of the wreck awake
And watch the vessel as, with gull-like sweep,
She meets the wind until her white wings shake
With sounding flappings on the dark-blue deep,
While, fawning on her, swelling billows leap.
Her fore and mizzen sails again soon fill ;
Her main are backed against the breeze to keep
Her near the spot, while, with a hearty will,
The crew stand by to save with promptitude and skill.

Oh ! who shall know the feelings of those men,
Who gasp for breath as they that ship draw nigh ?
Lost from their memories the blood-stained den,
And on their rescuers is fixed each eye,
While to their homes their thoughts exultant fly.
Brave friends are near whose honest faces glow
With eager kindness, but whose warning cry
To horror changes when the truth they know,
As ’neath their vessel’s lee glides up that charnel low.

The active seamen hoist the saved on deck,
 And wash away each filthy, gory stain,
 While mangled dead—sad relics of the wreck—
 With decent rites are given to the main
 To sleep the sleep devoid of dreams or pain,
 Till sharply roused by last great trumpet's call,
 With perfect forms, they then shall wake again,
 To be arraigned before the Judge of all.
 Here let the drama end ; here let the curtain fall !



MONEY.

There's nothing in this world of ours
 Like potent money ;
 It strews our daily path with flowers,
 And fruit, and honey ;
 The only pleasant salve to cure
 Most mundane troubles is, I'm sure,
All evils' root—that's money !

The worn-out rake a maid may buy—
 'Tis sad but funny ;
 A snob oft rules in circles high
 With lots of money ;
 While shameless plutocrats can be
 Sad sinners with propriety :
What sinners ? men with money !

But Time his march will not delay,
Not e'en for money ;
No golden bribe the writ will stay
Of SHERIFF bony :
So I'd advise this simple plan—
Enjoy, dear brothers, while you can,
Your pleasure-giving money !



A WOMAN'S SMILE.

A woman's smile is a mighty thing,
Though softly bright as the sunny spring
Of Austral's gracious clime ;
For bowed to it has the race of man
As willing slaves since the world began,
And will through coming time.

The despot fierce who can say "Go there,"
"Do this," "Do that," or "For death prepare,"
To countless subjects, still
By honeyed smile of a maid can be,
Like sighing lover of low degree,
Compelled to woman's will.

Ho ! Ho ! The priest he may virtue preach,
But acts not aye as he oft doth teach :
Ho ! Ho ! A woman's smile

Can move the soul of an anchorite
To slight his prayers in the still midnight,
And muse in godless style.

A lawyer's thoughts from his musty law
The magic smile of a maid can draw ;
E'en Justice on the Bench
The heedless slave of a smile can be,
When he and his twelve *true men* agree
To pet a comely wench.

Oh, who shall say what some smiles have done
For men who vowed that a heaven they'd won
To send them down *below*,
Where Satan *smiles* in a sultry way
On sinners who fast and loose *would* play
The *belle* as well as beau !

Yet weal or woe, while I still may live,
Give me the joy that a smile can give ;
And, if I'm fooled, why, then,
I'll write it off as a *partial* loss,
When positive gain I've had, of course,
Like other well-fooled men !



THE SOD OF TURF.

A TRUE STORY.

Green land of Old Erin ! thy sons and thy daughters,
Where'er they may wander, think ever of thee !
No matter how distant on earth's spreading quarters,
Their hearts are still with thee, thou Gem of the Sea !

And here to Australia, across the wide ocean,
Came one whose affections were tender and true ;
Her heart warm and steadfast, her life a devotion
To stern self-denial for friends old and new !

And though of a station in life poor and lowly,
With small earthly treasure she did what she could
To succour her neighbours ; and what is more holy
Than—like our Great Master—to try to do good ?

Long years had departed of mixed joy and sadness,
When from the Old Country came news that a friend
Intended to join them ; she heard it with gladness,
And wrote to her kindred a "turf-sod" to send ;

For, oh, 'twould remind her—that strange, simple treasure—

Of scenes of her childhood in Erin's fair isle !
No jewellery costly could give such a pleasure,
As that magic mirror her cares to beguile !

But as o'er the billows the gallant ship bounded,
That brought to Australia the turf and the friend,
They laid her to slumber, 'neath mound low and rounded,
In silent God's Acre—her ashes to blend

With those of the pilgrims departed before her,
Who came from the country they loved till they died—
A love that her children have fervently borne her,
Unmatched by e'en that of a man for his bride !



THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

(WRITTEN ON REVISITING MY NATIVE VILLAGE, AFTER AN ABSENCE FROM
IT OF TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS).

Where are my friends—my boyhood's friends—
I left behind at home,
When, young and bold, for Austral's gold,
I crossed the ocean's foam ?
The lark still sings on mounting wings,
The mavis on the tree ;
But sylvan scene and village green
Are tenantless for me.

Where are my friends—my boyhood's friends—
That long unchanged band
I met at night, in visions bright,
In Austral's far-off land ?

The winding stream, which erst did teem
With comrades splashing free,
Flows onward still, and ever will—
It empty is for me.

Where are my friends—my boyhood's friends—
The brave, the blithe, and fair ?
In silent grave ; beneath the wave ;
And scattered here and there ;
While those still left, of youth bereft,
With feelings changed I see.
Alone I stand on native land,
For changed is all to me !



THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

I sing the battle fierce and long
Of mercenary throng with throng,
Whose legions desperate fight
For fame and gold, nor pause awhile
When Death strikes down the rank and file ;
They grieve not at the sight.

Urged on by quenchless love of gain,
Their brains and nerves they fiercely strain—
Their fellows trample o'er ;

As on the crimson battle-field
The victors force their foes to yield,
Or seek the silent shore.

The time-scarred vet'ran, spent with toil,
Sinks down upon the trampled soil—
The grave receives its right.
When, ardent, to the front instead
Leaps the strong youth—by instinct led—
To join the madd'ning fight.

One motive rules the eager throng—
The will to prosper—right or wrong ;
Its motto, " All for self ! "
To each his neighbour is a foe,
Each thrives on neighbour's overthrow
Its constant aim seems self.

Keen competition is the cry
That steels the heart, that clears the eye,
And swells the battle's din ;
That makes the soldiers sternly laugh,
When fellow-mortal's hopes, like chaff,
Disperse—that they may win.

The lawyer sharp, the statesman sly,
The merchant shrewd, the parson dry,
The busy burgess stout,
The sons of toil, with brawny arms,
And women, with resistless charms—
Their rivals strive to rout.

And so 'twill be while mortals still
Have frames to clothe and mouths to fill,
And babes are born to join
As raw recruits the army vast
That surges, like a whirlwind's blast,
About almighty coin.



THE LOST ARGOSIES.

A wreck I see in shadow land,
On tideless dead sea's shore ;
Its ghostly company—*my hopes*—
Now lost for evermore ;
But long ago I spread her sails
To Fortune's winds that blew ;
For pleasant was the sea of life,
A careless band my crew.

And, ah ! a fairer barque I see,
'Neath glowing springtide skies ;
As freight a trusting heart had she,
And shining, love-lit eyes.
But as we sailed the storms of fate
My consort snatched away,
And she, too, lies on silent shore
Of phantom-haunted bay.

Full many an eager voyager
 The Corsair grim hath slain,
 Since cast away on weird coast
 Those once fair ships have lain ;
 Yet, drifting still in shattered craft,
 On life's cold winter seas,
 I ofttimes sigh 'neath gloomy sky
 For those lost argosies.



THE TEACHING OF THE WAVES.

QUESTION.

Bright, restless waves that roll upon the shore,
 Yet leave no record, save in figured sand,
 Which waves succeeding blot for evermore,
 As though with touch of Time's unsparing hand.

Seek ye to show the vanity of those
 Whose search for pleasure all their thoughts engage ;
 Who waste their lives ; who to themselves are foes ;
 And leave at last a soiled, unwritten page ?

Or, would ye give this motto to us all—
 " Who fear not failure, fortune shall obey ! "
 For, though impalpably ye seem to fall,
 You wear in time the hardest rocks away ?

ANSWER.

We teach true wisdom, though the heedless band
 Of human butterflies pause not to read ;
 For them all lessons written are in sand,
 Save only those which cause the heart to bleed.

The wise shall read, and from our teaching find—
 “ Like flowing waves should their endeavours run ;”
 The first may leave no lasting trace behind,
 Yet, all combined, shall see their object won !



NOTHING TO DO.

“ Nothing to do ! ” ’Tis a terrible thing,
 For mischief flits near on invisible wing,
 To whisper in idle ones’ ears,
 Who, then, like the “ Washford ” of Ingoldsby, feel
 An impulse for naughtiness over them steal—
 The germ of remorse for long years.

“ Nothing to do ! ” How some people repine
 At having to labour, and vow ’twould be fine
 To waste in inaction the hours.
 Oh ! little they know of the *ennui* that blights,
 And renders insipid all human delights
 Which are of existence the flowers.

"Nothing to do!" Yes, it sounds very nice;
 And so it is, too, if a very small slice
 The weary just take as a tonic.
 But sit not too long to enjoy it, or soon
 You'll find, when too late, your much coveted boon
 Has become a calamity chronic.



FAREWELL TO MY FELLOW-PASSENGERS ON THE SIAM.

Ye comrades free, who on the sea
 Made days and weeks pass pleasantly,
 To-morrow we must part,
 The surging, eager crowd to swell,
 All hoping aye to prosper well
 In Fame and Mammon's mart,

'Tis passing strange that never more
 We're like to meet on mundane shore,
 When severed wide we're cast—
 That only in kind fancy's dream
 Your faces bright shall on me gleam,
 Like pictures of the past.

The merry jest, the hearty laugh,
 The "Nap" and whist—well mixed with "chaff"—
 Like transient poppy flowers

With pleasant tints old time bestrewed,
Who dull had else been with his brood
Of lagging, listless hours.

But human life, from birth to grave,
Is—on dry land and liquid wave—
A strange kaleidoscope ;
The pieces, ever changing, fast
Bright scenes into confusion cast,
But should we therefore mope ?

For, turning onward, we may yet
More pleasure-raising pictures get,
To gladden heart and eye.
And, trusting such may really be
From now until eternity,
I'll bid you all " Good-bye ! "



CAMPING ALONE.

Only old Beppo grazing nigh,
My camp-fire's red gleams leaping high
Only the whispering trees that find
Gossip enough with the sighing wind ;
Only a saddle beneath my head,
Only the stars above me spread,
Only my pipe and pot of tea,
Out in the lonely bushland free.

Am I alone ? Oh, no ; with me
Is met a joyous company
Of festive friends, who laugh below
The holly and the mistletoe ;
While she I love—as only can
The healthful, young, and ardent man—
Avows her love with trustful eyes
Which shine like stars in southern skies ;

And ah ! she whispers soft and low,
“ I love you, Fred ; I love you so :
Then, from me, dearest, do not stray.
Why wait for wealth while heads grow grey ?
Of worldly gear what want we more,
That you should seek that distant shore ?
Oh ! sail not on the stormy sea,
But be content with love and me ! ”

The flames are sinking low,
And the wind in a myall tree
Is whispering sadly, “ Do not go,”
As she whispered it to me,
And the Southern Cross below.
Lonely am I and grey,
While Annie sleeps where daisies grow,
And peep from out the lingering snow,
In churchyard far away.



AUSTRALIANS, REMEMBER JOHN MCDOUALL STUART.

O careless dwellers in this southern clime,
Come ! Answer me ! Shall heroes' hard-earned fame
Soon pass away upon the wings of time,
And STUART sound an all unmeaning name ?
Say, shall the man who in the desert land
Vast trackless wilds through weary lengths explored—
Then safe brought back his brave, devoted band—
Now find his claim to gratitude ignored ?

By heat, by hunger, and by thirst oppressed ;
Racked by disease ; oft sought by deadly spear ;
The dauntless heart that beat within his breast
Defied despair, though death oft hovered near !
On, on he marched with dangers by the way,
While unknown perils ever lurked before ;
Until he stood, that memorable day,
With toil-spent band on longed-for ocean's shore !

A grand exploit which opened up the way
For lightning messages from all the world—
A theme far nobler for heroic lay
Than battle fought with proudest flags unfurled.
Its hero sleeps, far, far from conquest won,
'Neath silent churchyard's daisy-spangled sward,
And though right well his daring work was done,
We to the dead begrudge a due award.

Australia's sons ! for past neglect atone,
 And rear a monument, where all may see,
 Inscribed in bronze or long-enduring stone,
 Deeds that for ages should remembered be :
 Then o'er those words let life-like statue stand
 Of John McDonall Stuart, he who gave
 To all who read the secrets of this land,
 Then found himself a lowly English grave !

Coondambo, April 24, 1897.



TO EVENING.

WRITTEN AT THE CLOSE OF A VERY HOT DAY

Hail, eventide ! for one by one appear
 Thy wondrous gems, that ever softly shine ;
 While zephyrs whisper to the myalls near
 What soothing gifts are thine.
 'Midst lurid glare down rushed the orb of day,
 Like conflagration which—its rage o'erspent
 On regions near—is spreading far away,
 On fresh destruction bent.

With thy cool advent Nature breathes again,
 And crickets hail thee with a shrill delight ;
 While fainting mortals on the Austral plain
 Now welcome coming night :

For gentle sleep, with promptings kind from thee,
Will hover near to close each weary eye
Beneath the vast eternal canopy
Of starlit southern sky.

December 29, 1897.



TO A MOLOCH HORRIDUS.

(THE HORNY LIZARD OF THE AUSTRALIAN DESERT),

On seeing one stand beside an ant path, taking the insects as they passed with its tongue, the surviving ants not seeming to notice its presence or the disappearance of their fellows in the least, however close they might have been to the victims when they were *called away*.

Like silent Fate, beside the path you stand,
While countless ants before you hurry past,
Your spear-like tongue a member of the band,
With lightning thrust, has caused to breathe its last.
They heed you not—those ants on business bent ;
They give no thought to comrades gone before :
On formic schemes they all are too intent
To think of death, though standing at their door.

And, like those ants, the careless human race
Grim ruin heeds not when its *neighbours fall*;
Too oftentimes the mourner's tearful face
Excites no pity in men's hearts at all :
Yet when our Moloch—all-destroying Death—
Shall come to claim us it would tend to cheer
Our fainting souls, ere yielding up our breath,
Had we been kinder to our fellows here.

THE DROUGHT-RUINED FARM.

A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PICTURE OF 1897.

A desert plain 'neath cold, grey, winter's skies,
Where fretful dust careers before the blast,
Like tattered signal of distress that flies
From shipwreck's shattered mast.
Is that a farm, where once the growing grain,
Like ocean's bosom, undulating, rolled ;
Where oftentimes the softly falling rain
Of fruitful harvests told ?

Those fences gaunt, which bare, red paddocks bound,
Like mocking spectres stand in grim array ;
No blade of grass within their lines is found,
No rick of saving hay :
No sturdy plough-horse occupies yon shed,
No portly cow to crown the housewife's pail :
'Tis *roofless* now ; on *thatch the creatures* fed
While it might them avail.

Gone, like the past, are gatherings which years
Of patient labour wrung from wayward soil ;
While penury and, for the future, fears
Reward the farmer's toil :
Yes ; ruin reigns, and even hope, that brings
Such gentle comfort to the troubled breast,
From such a scene has spread her shining wings,
Its hopelessness confessed !

May 16th, 1897.

TO SUSPENSE.

What rival fiend can equal thee, Suspense,
For mental tortures, lingering and fell ?
To virtue surely 'twould be hoist immense
Could we be certain that in halls of hell
Thy hateful presence Satan's powers shall swell
For torments terrible to souls of men,
Doomed for eternity in flames to dwell !
Ah ! if, as comrade we shall find thee, then
They'll have to drag me to detested den.

Than dwell with thee I'd rather flit in space,
'Midst cold and darkness of an endless night,
A lonely ghost, far, far from realms of grace,
From smiling planets, from vast founts of light,
And all things beautiful to spirit's sight.
But awful void would prove no bar to thee,
For thither presently thoud'st wing thy flight,
To vaguely hint that called back I might be,
Or have some spooks to bear me company !

When dearest friend is visited by death,
What silent agony wrings heart and brain,
As, bending low, we listen for the breath
That flutters, stops, yet feebly starts again
For final struggle, which must be in vain !
Then thou art near to force the stifled groan
By dread uncertainty's protracted pain ;
Till glad are we when definitely flown
Is errant soul to infinite unknown !

Oh ! what is hunger to the constant pain—

Thy tugging at the heart-strings—when we watch
Long, weary months for all-reviving rain,
And wrench from nightmare, with strained ear, to catch
Its welcome patter in the dust-grimed thatch ?
A few drops fall, when, ah ! that gusty wind,
To southward veering, surely will o'ermatch
The brooding clouds, so anxious to be kind ;
They flee in haste, but *thou* art left behind

To jostle Hope, till with despair she blends,
And is a mixture hard to be defined ;
But through its agency *thou* gain'st thine ends,
When, vulture-like, it preys upon the mind
To banish sleep or foster dreams unkind :
Thou art that mixture, and in friendly mask
You sickly tortures for your victims find,
Till, crushed at heart, they recklessly shall ask
For call of death or soul-destroying flask.

I'll write no more, for thou to all mankind
Art known *too* well, and hated as a pest—
The greatest surely even fate can find
As fell “familiar” for the human breast,
To steal its peace and snatch from life its zest ;
No cheerful word can mortals say of thee,
Though all anathematise as fiend possessed :
So, fare thee well ! I would the same to me
You now could say, and absent ever be !



SELF-RELIANCE.

March on, young warrior ! March on
For spoil from Fortune to be won ;
And, breathing bold defiance,
Bear down on opposition, dight
In potent armour for the fight—
A sturdy self-reliance !

March on ! March on ! with courage high,
With manful heart and steadfast eye,
And charge, with cheer like thunder,
Misfortune's legions, whose array,
With gloomy banners, bar thy way,
And fain would bear thee under !

March on ! March on ! with Hope to lead,
And Faith to aid in time of need,
And Fortune's steep rock clamber ;
And shouldst thou fall upon the way,
Like knight in harness, pass away
To death's calm realms of slumber !

**TIME.**

Old Time strides on with steady pace,
His speed he quickens never ;
Yet still he runs a winning race,
And keeps the course for ever !

By night and day, while worlds decay,
He strides along for ever.
For ever, yes, for ever !

He glances down, with scornful face,
On mortals swift and clever,
And, as each drops from out the race,
He leaves them there for ever.
Both great and small, he leaves them all,
And strides along for ever.
For ever, yes, for ever !

But still yourselves, ye mortals, brace
For *Fame*—it dieth never !
And, though ye drop from out the race,
Your name may live for ever.
Then gain a name, and let your fame
Stride on, with Time for ever !
For ever, yes, for ever !



DEPARTED FRIENDS.

When fortune smiles, when hopes run high,
And youth with pleasure glides along,
If e'en the best and dearest die,
Our mourning for them lasts not long ;
Yet, latent in our hearts, the pain
Sleeps but to wake in time again.

For trouble comes in sombre guise,
And age his heavy hand extends ;
Then, with sad souls and tearful eyes,
We muse on our departed friends ;
The mists of years before us fall,
And we their priceless worth recall.

Oh ! hearts by weary yearning wrung,
How all your pains and sorrows swell,
If conscience, with upbraiding tongue,
Of cold neglect to them can tell !
Ye writhe in torture, self-accused,
'Neath what once sophistry excused.

Then you to whom kind fortune gives,
To cheer in life your onward way,
Dear friends and loving relatives
Devotion show them while you may,
And, when they are no longer here,
Your lonely hours shall memory cheer.



IN MEMORIAM: PRINCESS ALICE.

Unloose true sorrow's tearful tide ;
Let all its founts be opened wide,
Ye denizens of earth ;
For heedless death has stricken down
A shining jewel in the crown
Of piety and worth.

A lady of right royal line,
She gracious wisdom could combine
 With duty in the sphere
Of usefulness, so grandly trod,
With gentle love to man and God,
 With conscience ever clear.

From blushing maidenhood alway
Bright virtue was the guiding ray
 That led her footsteps right,
In godly path of narrow bound,
Where mortals are so seldom found,
 From life's morn till its night.

Her dying sire with pious love
She tended till, like wearied dove,
 His spirit sped away ;
A pattern child, a faithful wife,
A mother who her priceless life
 For loved one's life could pay !

Then silently, with lowered head,
The mem'ry of the sainted dead
 All tearfully bedew,
And treasure it with sacred things,
Till, sternly on unswerving wings,
 Death calls at last for you !



THE UNANSWERED QUESTION.

Far into high immensity of space
I silent gaze, with ever-longing soul,
To pierce the mystery of shining place,
Where countless worlds within their orbits roll.
Yon tiny star—a twinkling point of light—
Is that a sun whose vivifying rays
Vast, unknown sphere's inhabitants delight,
Who join with us in God's eternal praise?

Of many mansions, Christ the Saviour said,
Is God's great house; and can those mansions be
Delightful worlds that, by attraction led,
Revolve round suns—perhaps those stars we see?
And if to hell, for sins committed here,
Our trembling souls shall be for ever hurled,
Will such dread place be found in photosphere
Of flaming orb, round which this earth is whirled?

Shall we, unseen, revisit loved ones here?
Shall we rejoin the dear ones gone before?
Will God's stupendous mysteries be clear
When mundane things for us shall be no more?
Ah! who can say?—for till on pinions free
From earthly dross our spirits wing their flight,
Of hopes conflicting and of doubts must be
Our souls communing 'neath the stars of night.

January 28th, 1897.

THE CALL OF DEATH.

O thou to whom both young and old,
The cringing slave, the freeman bold,
Resign their breath ;
At whose dread call must haste away
The spirit from its house of clay,—
Thy name is Death !

The infant, like an opening flower,
Is called by thee from mundane bower
To bloom above :
It leaves behind the storms of life
Its tears, its troubles, and its strife,
And findeth love.

'Neath age's load the cripple bends ;
A trouble to himself and friends ;
In constant pain :
Yet struggles to evade the blow
That would in mercy lay him low,
New life to gain.

The king upon his couch of state
Must yield him tamely to his fate
When thou dost call ;
For bishop's prayer or army's might
Avail him nothing in thy sight,—
Thou king of all !

The mendicant on wretched bed,
In garret or in cellar spread,
 May beg of thee
To grant his life a longer span,
E'en though of want, as it began :
 In vain begs he.

The lawyer, like a common thief,
Is summoned from existence brief
 By writ of thine
To answer for his moral flaws,
And plead his soul's eternal cause
 In courts divine.

No legal quibble will avail,
No point of law 'gainst thee prevail :
 He must away
And wait, with those whom for a fee
In earthly courts defended he,
 The Judgment Day.

The ardent soldier who would win
A deathless fame 'midst battle's din
 In foreign land
Is 'whelmed beneath war's horrid wave,
And sinks into a nameless grave
 At thy command.

The sailor, calm when tempests lower,
And resolute e'en in the hour
 He meets with thee ;

On stormy coast is helpless cast,
And 'midst fierce breakers breathes his last
At thy decree.

The poor old widow's only son,
Who by his toil her bread has won,
No pity gains ;
For, stalking grimly on thy prey,
His fainting soul is forced away
With racking pains.

The spendthrift who at duns would jeer,
Ignoring debts contracted here,
Yet felt no shame,
You single out from reckless band,
And, with dread summons in thy hand,
Enforce your claim.

The horseman, in his manhood's pride,
Who could the wildest outlaw ride
With fearless heart,
All helpless on the level plain
From falling, quiet horse was slain
By cruel dart.

The sneaking coward who, afraid
Of rustle that a leaf has made,
And danger shirks,
Although he doubles like a hare,
Must fall at last into the snare
Thy fell hand works.

The miser old thou dost surprise
At midnight when, with greedy eyes,
 He counts his gold :
He fears thy call, but dreadeth more
The parting from that shining store—
 So often told :

The lucre gained in many lands
He clutches in his skinny hands
 Till his last gasp.
But what no tale of misery
Could make him give is torn by thee
 From his close grasp.

At thy approach the infidel,
Who oft has laughed at heaven and hell,
 In wild despair
Beseeches thee, with sighs and tears,
To grant him yet a few more years.
 Ah ! fruitless prayer !

His time is come ; he must away ;
But whither ? Who shall dare to say ?
 He will be tried
By HIM who gave a soul to man,
And in whose sight no mortal can
 Be justified.

The dying Christian calmly waits
The final call, and through thy gates
 Can glory see,

And longing for the joys above,
Where all is painless peace and love,
He welcomes thee.

Though thou canst claim the mortal frame,
Thou canst not interfere with fame ;
For though all die,
A good man's name is ever dear,
And lives with his descendants here,
In memory.

Then let us all improve each day
Of sojourn here, that, when away
We too must hie,
Like Christians we may meet our end,
And bid each sorrow-stricken friend
A calm good-bye.



THE UNIVERSE.

When day has passed what mortal mind may grasp,
In realms of space, the Universal Plan,
Where mighty suns with fair attendant worlds
By millions shine, but from us so remote
That to our vision they are stellar dust
On solemn dome of night ! With silent awe
We gaze into the infinite, wherein
The works of Great Arch Architect are spread,

And where a messenger, by His command,
Could, with the swift velocity of light,
Speed on for ever and be passing aye
New systems vast, yet reach no final bound.



THE OUTCAST TO HER BABY.

O my baby ! destitute and weary
Stray we in a wilderness of woe ;
Grimmest spectres crowd its pathways dreary ;
Joy's glad sunshine we can never know ;
Ever o'er us brood the clouds of sorrow ;
Shame and hunger to us closely cling :
All my longing is to 'scape the morrow—
From us now the load of life to fling.

In some deep pool of the silent river
We may find forgetfulness and rest,
Costing only one convulsive shiver,
One kind shiver ending all the rest.
Mercy, baby, we may find hereafter ;
Scorn alone has been our portion here ;
Mirth we've known not—saving ribald laughter :
Life, not *death*, is what the wretched fear !

IN MEMORIAM: CARDINAL MANNING.

And thou art gone, O venerable priest !
Who, though a member of that ancient Church
Which brooks no rival, no communion holds
With other dogma, article, or creed,
Would, like thy Master, when He trod this earth,
Thy hand extend to all who help might need.

By "golden rule" thy steps were ever led
In constant search for poverty and woe ;
And, finding them, thou couldst with words of fire
Burn into hearts, all adamantine else,
The stern conviction that 'tis deadly sin
To feast like Dives while the million starve.

A gentle pity aye thou didst extend
To want's sad moan and sin's despairing cry ;
And yet—as Paladin wast ever bold
To seek injustice, and with high resolve
Assail it in its hold—its hydra heads
Defied thee only but to be excised.

Yes, thou art dead ; but in the hearts of all
Who reverence piety and sterling worth
Thou livest still, and will to times remote,
When names of kings and princes empty words
Will sound in listless ears. Upon thy tomb
Should be inscribed—*He lives for evermore !*

THE OLD MAN'S BIRTHDAY.

Again my birthday, and with smiling faces
The neighbours come to wish me many more.
Will *next* one find me in earth's pleasant places,
Or gone for ever to the Unknown Shore?
Ah! who can tell? But when strong manhood's glamour,
With birthdays past, has long since fled away,
For longer sojourn we no longer clamour,
But say "'tis well" and Providence obey.

How very far I deemed when I was starting
From youth's bright threshold was life's journey's end :
That seems but yesterday, yet now I'm parting,
Aye, one by one, from every ancient friend.
I watched them changing—youth and comely maiden—
From laughing springtide to their summer's prime,
In life rejoicing, but when trouble-laden,
'Neath winter's snows, they grudged not flight of time.

Aye, so it is : in youth, replete with pleasure,
We cling to life as to our all in all ;
To old age even it may seem a treasure—
On *cheery natures* life can never pall :
Yet still when Death is surely coming for us
We do not shrink in terror from his blow,
For endless rest seems opening before us ;
We've had our innings ; it is time to go.

September 19th, 1901.

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE.

“ Good night ! good night ! ” the mother said,
When, leaning o’er her infant’s bed,
She kissed his mouth so rosy.

“ Good night ! good night ! ” she said again ;
Another loving kiss, and then
She left him warm and cosy.

And, going out with footfall light,
She left the candle burning bright,
Till sleep, on silent pinions,
With fingers deft his eyes would close,
While fervently her prayers arose
To Heaven’s supreme dominions

That he, her son, might grow in grace,
To run with credit in the race
Prescribed on earth for mortals ;
And when, with years and honours crowned,
He should by kindly death be found,
His soul would win the portals

Of God’s great house, where sin is not,
Where pain and sorrow are forgot,
Where tears can trickle never ;
And, doubting not that she shall fly,
To self-same mansion in the sky,
Trusts they shall joy for ever.

And soon she seeks the little bed,
Where—sleep's bright visions round his head—
 Her darling now lies dreaming ;
While sunny smiles upon his face
Appear to her from Throne of Grace
 Replies of hopeful seeming.

So, taking up her light, she goes
With noiseless tread to seek repose,
 And leaves him to his slumber ;
But never dreams that her fair child
Will grow up, like a nettle wild,
 Earth's smiling face to cumber.

* * * * *

Long years in pauseless march have sped
To shadow land of ages dead,
 Since innocent and fair
On snowy bed that infant lay,
And dreamed the peaceful night away,
 In guardian angel's care.

Can this be he who, on the sand,
Lies dying in a desert land
 From thirst and hunger's pangs?—
A ghastly creature, ragged, worn,
Too mean for word or glance of scorn,
 A prey to conscience fangs !

But e'er the spirit wings its flight
 O'er pallid face there gleams a light :
 It is indeed no other.
 And, ah ! a soft word leaves that tongue,
 Whence oft the ribald curse hath rung—
 The cherished name of “ Mother ! ”

Oh ! heart-wrung parents, do not weep
 When Death your budding flowers would reap—
 'Tis surely for the better ;
 For life is full of stormy days,
 And mortals stray by thorny ways
 To die in sin's dread fetter.



TO ELEPHANTA.

WRITTEN AFTER VISITING IT.

O lonely temple, on deserted isle ;
 O pagan glory of the Ind of eld,
 Would thou wast vocal, and could me beguile
 With tales of pageants in thine honour held ;
 And tell of sculptors, now ignored by fame,
 Whose chisels wrought your monster gods from stone,
 Which, in their silent impotence, would claim
 The boundless might possessed by *One* alone.

No words are thine, yet eloquent art thou
The utter nothingness of man to prove
Beside the grandeur of *our* God, who now,
As in the past, the universe can move ;
Whilst, like old playthings of a careless child
That lie forgotten, broken, and despised,
Thy gods are shattered and with dust defiled,
Though deathless deemed by those who them devised.

A few short years, and 'neath thy caverned hill
A loathsome den of reptiles shall remain,
Devoid of form, a monument of nil,
And grave of gods whose attributes are vain.



A BUSHMAN'S ADDRESS TO THE MORNING STAR.

In Austral wild my vigils drear
Through winter's night I'm keeping here,
'Midst solitude supreme,
Where noiseless nightbirds flitting past
Strange ghostlike semi-shadows cast
Beneath the astral gleam.

The present creeps into the past,
Each moment longer than the last.
I heap the brands anew,

While cold wind's whispers mingled are
With eerie voices from afar
Whose authors shun my view.

Stars westward sink, as if in flight
From dark dominion of the night ;
Yet distant seems the day,
Till radiantly bright you rise,
The herald in the eastern skies
Of morning's advent grey.

All hail, then, planet, fairest gem
In night's refulgent diadem !
I hail thee with delight
When in the boundless realms of space
You shine, a queen of matchless grace,
To my enraptured sight.

Now, cheered by thee and ruddy blaze,
Comes fancy, as I upward gaze,
With train of musing fair ;
And, ah, what luxury for me,
My mind, like soaring lark, is free
Awhile from sordid care !

Then hail, thou vision softly bright,
So dear to lonely bushman's sight !
No star can vie with thee,
When, like some guardian seraph fair,
You watch the world from upper air
And seem to smile on me.

But now above Mount Arden plays
Aurora, robed in roseate rays,
Announcing Phœbus near ;
The stars have vanished one by one,
And you, your cheering mission done,
Must also disappear.



THE ORIGIN OF THE HORSE.

AN ARAB LEGEND.

As lightning gleamed from riven cloud,
Whence followed thunder long and loud,
Great Allah's mind, with equal speed,
From it conceived the Arab steed.
The swiftness and the heart of fire,
'These, these, the all-creating Sire,
In supple form of strength and grace,
Bestowed on first of equine race ;
And, tempering all with southern wind,
Said, " Truly love and serve mankind ! "

With flashing eyes and nostrils spread
The creature o'er the desert sped,
While boldly forth its thrilling neigh
In echoes floated far away.
Like rushing wind in whirling course
Careered the yet unbridled horse—

A perfect thing, with life replete,
One only Allah could complete.
Now wheeling here, now wheeling there,
As eagles wheel in upper air,
Its hoof strokes vexed the sounding plain,
Pursued by fretful dust in vain ;
Till, flecked with foam, it snorting stood,
And Allah smiled and said, "'Tis good !"

Great Allah's gift, the horse has been
The noblest friend that man has seen ;
In warfare and in peace his pride ;
To Arab dearer than his bride ;
And while on mundane shore shall dwell
The human race will story tell,
To those who listen or shall read,
Of glory won by man and steed.



THE HERO OF '91*.

"Come, list to the tale I'll tell to you—
You'll scarcely believe it, yet 'tis true,
As true as the truth can be—
Of a gay young chap, with smooth-shaved chin,
Who swam in the jaws of death to win
A life in the tropic sea.

Don't prate to me of your soldiers' fame
That's won by the sword 'midst smoke and flame—
And din of the battlefield ;
For it to his is as star's faint ray
To the all-pervading light of day
Our glorious sun can yield :

For comrades' cheers in the fierce charge there,—
The drum's loud roll and the trumpet's blare,
Can drive from the breast all fear ;
While he—but my tale I'll tell, and then
You'll own that with all time's bravest men.
His claim to be classed is clear.

In Aden's gulf one red-hot day
The swift Massilia held her way
'Neath sky that had no cloud,
When a Lascar fell from her lofty side,
With sounding splash in the heaving tide,
That roused our languid crowd :

For some rushed here, and some rushed there,
And left to cool was each easy chair ;
To deck were novels dropped ;
While scarce had that Lascar 'gan to swim
Than a buoy was snatched and flung for him,
And the engines, too, were stopped.

Our young "fourth" sprang to the davits quick,
And cried, "Cast off those falls! Be slick,
And lower her handsomely ;

And mind you, my lads, that all is clear,
For death won't wait if we stay long here ;
To give way ready be ! ”

But the cry was raised, “ Sharks ! Sharks ! There's three,
And the boat too late to save will be ! ”

With many an “ Ah ! ” and “ Oh ! ”

But Cooper, seizing a seaman's knife,
With never a thought for his own young life,
Plunged into the waves below.

Three sharp fins stole through the dark blue brine,
And those three sharks seemed in haste to dine
From their helpless human prey,
Who well-nigh died in his mortal fear,
Though he saw the brave young Yankee near,
Swim past on his daring way.

But how could a man with *three sharks* fight,
Alone, immersed, and in open sight ?

All hearts save his own stood still.

What could he do ? Why, his dauntless air
Could even *sharks* from their banquet scare :
Hurrah for his iron will !

The sharks they *swerved*, but the man swam *straight*,
As it seemed, to death's wide-opened gate,

To stain with his gore the tide ;

But, ah ! like a flash, beneath the flood

He dived, and the waves were red with blood ;—

But 'twas from a monster's side !

Oh that fierce fiend-fish had then to find
Relentless foes in its savage kind,
 And fled as the hunted may ;
While he who had used so well his knife
In fight for his own and a Lascar's life
 Won a deathless fame that day.



IN WATTLE-SCENTED LANE.

On vagrant wing the idle zephyr plays
At hide and seek in many a sylvan nook,
To linger lovingly 'midst golden sprays
Of perfume sweet that fringe the shining brook ;
With drowsy hum the honey-laden bee
O'er lengthening shadows wings its homeward flight,-
While cheerful crickets in shrill ecstasy
All "wind their horns" to welcome coming night.

CHORUS.

In boundless space the stars for night are waiting ;
I wait you here my own, my darling Jane,
Whilst leaflet tongues Æolian are prating
Of love's delights in wattle-scented lane.

That grand old gum, what stories it could tell
Of whispers low, of hand-clasp, sigh, of kiss,
And fond embrace, for long remembered well ;
Sweet food for dreams ; kind memories of bliss.

Now merry Jack, with laughter, seems to say,
 “Fool, wait no longer ; do not come again ;
Your darling Jane with favoured lover strays ;
 That goblin bird’s rude mockery is vain.”

CHORUS.

The peeping stars for coming night are waiting ;
 I wait you here my own, my bonny Jane,
Whilst leaflet tongues Æolian are prating
 Of love’s delights in wattle-scented lane.

Now winding road I watch, with longing eyes
 And bated breath, to note your coming, dear ;
My heart is calling, and kind Hope replies,
 “ She keeps her tryste ; your pretty one is near.”
True prophet, Hope ! A graceful form I see ;
 It swiftly comes, with fawn-like footsteps light ;
Fond whispered words are melody to me ;
 Sweet lips meet mine ; I clasp you with delight.

CHORUS.

The shining stars no more for night are waiting ;
 Come, kiss me, darling ; kiss me once again ;
While leaflet tongues Æolian are prating,
 The world for us is wattle-scented lane.



BE HAPPY WHILE YOU'RE YOUNG.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

Some good folks, when growing old,
Lament much—so I am told—
Youthful pleasures on their consciences, which burn ;
But I rather think that they
More regret, when growing grey,
Those pleasures that old age is forced to spurn.

CHORUS.

Then be happy while you're young,
While your joy bells still are rung,
And care from youth's glad laughter flies away ;
Pleasure calls us every hour, with a bright, mysterious power :
Let us hasten, let us hasten to obey.

We are certain, you and me,
That kind, stolen kisses be
To maiden and to youth as honey sweet ;
*But just think of grandpapa
Kissing Jones's grandmamma,
And *endeavouring* to fancy it a treat !

CHORUS—Then kiss when yet you're young, &c.

Enjoy now tuneful songs,
Ere you have to list for gongs,
With sound-conducting trumpet at your ear ;

And dance, too, while you can,
Be you maiden or young man,
For age is creeping on you year by year.

CHORUS—Then dance, &c.

I don't say, my friends, at all
That to folly you should fall,
But accept of each good gift that pleasure brings ;
Just have lots of harmless fun,
Ere your springtide course is run
And darksome shadows fall from trouble's wings.

CHORUS.

Then be happy while you're young,
While your joy bells still are rung,
And care from youth's glad laughter flies away ;
Pleasure calls us every hour with a bright, mysterious power :
Let us hasten, let us hasten to obey.



UNITE AUSTRALIA.

Britannia's sons, who hither came
This land of sunny skies to claim,
The time has come for you to be
A great united family.

What though you love Old England still,
 Look round on valley, plain, and hill,
 Look round on all you hold most dear,
 And swear to be united here.

CHORUS.

United in prosperity,
 United in adversity,
 United, too, if war's alarms
 Should loudly call "To arms ! To arms !"

Remember, strength is unity !
 United then for ever be !
 Let jealousy aside be cast :
 There's room for all in south land vast.
 Take each the other by the hand—
 A faithful and undaunted band—
 And 'neath one flag march on to claim
 Prosperity and future fame.

CHORUS.—United in prosperity, &c.

Should Fortune's frowns upon you rest,
 Together cling and do your best,
 And just as sunshine follows rain
 On you shall Fortune smile again.
 Australia *united* can,
 And shall be, always in the van
 Of progress and of liberty,
 Strong in her sons and unity.

CHORUS.—United in prosperity, &c.

BULLOCKY BILL.

I'll sing you a song, boys, of Bullocky Bill,
Who's honest as daylight, and harder than nails ;
He's out in all weathers, yet never is ill ;
His pluck or his patience ne'er fails ;
No barber he knows, so his bushy beard flows
Far down on his dusty, broad breast,
And wags as its owner a flanker bestows
On kelping old Ranger with zest.

CHORUS.

'Tis "Come hither, Major !" and "Come hither, Mag !"
And "Come hither, Boxer and Bold !"
Just hear his thong cracking, and see his team drag
(Twelve pairs of big bullocks all told).

When dingoes slink home Bill is up and away
From rug that he slept in at wagon wheel's side ;
By heavy, long stage in fierce heat of the day,
His team with *late start* would be tried.
Where storm water flows, there the mulga tree grows
In thickets his toilers love well ;
Each haunt of the cattle our Bullocky knows—
Can swear to the tongue of each bell.

CHORUS.

'Tis "*Woa* back, you, Brandy !" and "Stand up there, Sam !"
And "*Would you*, young fellow ! Not quite !
You'll soon be as quiet, my boy, as a lamb,
When worked with and coupled to Bright !"

His bullocks all yoked, with strong teeth like a mill
Bill worries his damper, and drinks his black tea ;
On tucker for emus he's taken his fill,
And ready for starting is he :
O'er tableland track, where huge rocks his wheels rack,
Through sands where they sink fellow deep,
He pilots his team with a driver's true knack,
And, my word ! at night he *can* sleep !

CHORUS.

'Tis "Gee way, there, Leopard ! Gee, Tiger and Tim !"
If dreamland's queer team he should find,
When stars from dark canopy shine down on him,
And whispers the soft southern wind !



THE SONG OF THE GOLDSEEKER.

There's plenty of gold 'neath the virgin mould
Still hid in the bushland free ;
Then hey for its quest with a quenchless zest—
'Twas ever the game for me !

I toil through the sand of this desert land,
And prospect its hills and plains ;
While hunger and thirst they may work their worst,
With golden salve for my pains.

CHORUS.

Then hey for the stuff, dull, yellow, and rough—
Big nuggets for choice say I—
And hope-beckoned tramp for some far-out camp,
Roofed in by the boundless sky !

No thirst on the earth which from souls finds birth
Can drive like the lust for gold ;
No hungering urge with such wave-like surge
As that of its hunters bold :
For should there be heard e'en a whisper'd word
Of wonderful find, why then
They'll hurry along in a reckless throng,
Aye, e'en to a certain den !

CHORUS.

Then hey for the god that in rock or sod
Can summon its headstrong slaves
To flock to its shrines—oft fabulous mines—
And thousands, too, to their graves !

Where salt lagoons gleam as in ghostly dream,
And drought is a tyrant grim,
I hustle the flies from my sweat-drenched eyes
While growling a *backward* hymn.

Oft ragged and worn and of mien forlorn,
Yet dodging the lost one's fate,
I peg out a claim with some sounding name,
And *sell* to a syndicate !

CHORUS.

Then hey for the ore that means wealth galore,
Or rest by a myall tree,
Where crows from afar with a jubilant a-r-r,
Will fossick rich claims—*on me !*



THE BUSHMAN'S DREAM.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

Thousands of miles from my native land,
Out in the bushland free,
Wrapped in my rug 'neath the myall old,
What do you think I see ?
Why, a grey village on English soil,
Set in a landscape fair,
With many a nook and many a tree
I knew in my boyhood there.

Friends of my youth, oh ! ye laugh again—
Laugh with a heartfelt glee—
There in the shade of the verdant lane,
Down by the hollow tree.

Hark to the singing of happy birds !
Blithe as those birds are we ;
For Annie and Joe and bonny young Jane
Again are my comrades free.

Back to my heart comes its youthful glow,
Glorious hope and mirth ;
Jenny, I clasp you again to my heart—
Happiest boy on earth !
What do I hear ?—not a lark's clear note ?
No, 'tis a curlew's scream ;
And the night wind sighs 'mid the myall sprays
At the flight of a bushman's dream.



DEAR OLD ENGLAND.

England ! home of freedom ! fairest island
Earth can boast ! the birthplace of the brave !
Though so distant still I call thee *my land* ;
I shall love thee till I find a grave !
Wife and children fill my home with gladness,
Friends have I as true as friends may be,
Health and strength, and causes few for sadness,
Still I pine, my native land, for thee !

CHORUS.

England, dear Old England, how I love thee !
Though so long an exile from thy shore ;
As the stars that ceaseless shine above thee,
So my heart is with thee evermore !

Sunshine, glorious sunshine, smiles upon me,
Plenty reigns, and liberty is here ;
Still I long once more to look upon thee,
And those scenes to memory ever dear.
Of the comrades of my boyhood golden
Few remain who roamed those scenes with me :
'Tis the friends of those times sweet and olden
I so yearn for, who in dreams I see.

CHORUS—England, dear Old England ! &c.

England, dear Old England ! still thy meadows,
Grey old church, and sunny cricket-green,
Summer clouds, with softest lights and shadows,
In my musings are like pictures seen ;
Still I hear my gentle mother speaking—
Jeannie's whispers—woodland minstrelsy ;
Nests and garlands I am once more seeking,
When alone I camp 'neath myall tree.

CHORUS.

England, dear Old England ! how I love thee !
Though so long an exile from thy shore ;
As the stars that ceaseless shine above me,
So my heart is with thee ever more !



THE ADVENT OF SPRING.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

St. Valentine's Day, with its fluttering hearts,
Is over and gone for the year ;
Yet Love is still busily plying his darts,
For springtime, glad springtime, is here.

Though blustering winds, on bleak, rain-laden wing
Of winter still rave, as in fear,
Near spent is the reign of the grim, icy king,
For springtime, glad springtime, is here.

The snowdrop so pure and the crocuses gay
Proclaim that their goddess so dear
Is thinking of beautiful garlands for May ;
Yes, springtime, glad springtime, is here.

The swallow and cuckoo are now on the way,
Old England the happy to cheer ;
Forgetting the winter, come let us be gay,
For springtime, glad springtime, is here.



THE LAST KISS.

Air by Karl Muscat.

Oh ! my darling, since your love you told me,
Long ago upon that summer's eve,
Oft I've longed your arms might once enfold me,
Ere this bright world's pleasures I must leave

I have longed, oh ! I have longed to hear you
Tell again your love in accents low ;
I could die contented were you near me,
Dearest love, to kiss me ere I go.

Oh ! my darling, do these eyes behold you ?
Yes, 'tis you who kneel beside me there ;
Do not weep, although the truth they've told you ;
I am happy ; do not so despair.
Say you love me, place your arms around me,
Take my head upon your bosom—so.
Hark ! they call me ; angel forms surround me :
Kiss me, dearest ! kiss me ere I go !



TOM BLANK THE HONEST LAWYER.

Tom Blank was a lawyer so honest that he
Would never receive a retainer or fee,
Until he was certain his client was one
Who never the slightest injustice had done ;
And even had such a one come for advice,
'Tis certain that Tom would have said in a trice,
" Beware, oh ! beware of the law, if you're wise,
For lawyers, not clients, rake in every prize ! "

A good man was Tom, in his gown and his wig ;
A too utter saint in piratical rig ;
For though wealthy clients would come to his door,
He'd send them away to attend to the poor ;

For *justice*, not law, was the aim of his life,
And truth even dearer to him than his wife.
With conscience so tender what wonder that he
Was never enabled to pocket a fee.

His children grew ragged, his wife she grew wan,
And Satan—the saint of all lawyers—began
To whisper to Tom that the truth was no go,
And justice a thing that was terribly slow ;
So Tom took to quibbles, extortion, and lies,
And, from that same moment commencing to rise,
Is now a law magnate whose wealth and renown
And stylish turnout is the talk of the town.

Now those who have listened to this, my queer song,
Don't think I'd advise you, my friends, to go wrong,
To quibble, tell lies, and extort cent. per cent.,
For such, I assure you, is not my intent.
Oh, no, not at all, for I *do* love a man
Who's good to the poor, and tells truth when he can ;
But this I do say, " Oh, beware of all lawyers !
'Tis *fools* and their *money* that make them top-sawyers !



STUPID PETER.

DEDICATED TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.-

Air—"Juanita."

Leaning o'er his liquor,
Lingering lolls the fledgling fop,
Grins a senseless snicker,
Strokes his chin's "down crop."
On the barmaid slender
His sheep's eyes they love to dwell ;
Fuddled looks, yet tender,
Throws this would-be swell.
Peter, stupid creature !
She don't care a pin for you ;
Peter, stupid creature !
What I say is true !

He'll take to pawning ;
Nought cares he, but drinks again,
And, prudence scorning,
Looks his love in vain.
Grog his breath all scenting,
Like an oyster is his eye ;
Oh ! he'll be repenting
Ere the night's gone by.
Peter, stupid creature !
You that yet may be a man !
Peter, stupid creature !
By " Darwin's plan."

PLEASE BUY A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

“ *Please* buy a bunch of violets,
Only a penny, sir,”
A poor child begged, whose wistful eyes
Were softly blue as southern skies,
Though shoeless were her feet.
A pretty child, half-clad, was she
Who shyly thus accosted me,
My custom to entreat.

“ Please buy a bunch of violets ;
Indeed, sir, they are sweet.”

“ Please buy a bunch of violets,
Only a penny, sir.”
That voice, those timid eyes, they seemed
Like voice and eyes of which I’d dreamed
In days for me long fled,
When I a maiden loved, and she,
By parents urged, though loving me,
Their favoured one had wed.
My gaze was on the violets,
My thoughts were with the dead.

“ *Please* buy a bunch of violets,
Only a penny, sir.”
I chose some bunches, as I said,
“ I’ll be thy friend, my little maid,
To me thy story tell.”

And then I found life's changeful sea
Had cast a helpless waif to me
From her I loved so well.
That orphan no more violets
For daily bread shall sell.



"IT IS NOT MY FAULT, I DECLARE."

Air by R. Bruce.

What are you winking at, impudent star?
Is it at Philip and me?
Well, wink as you will from your station afar,
You cannot tell tales, don't you see.
If Philip does happen to stroll to the stile
When somehow I chance to be there,
And we on the top rail should linger awhile,
It is not my fault, I declare.
Dear Philip is handsome, and Philip is kind,
And Philip, they say, is my spark;
So somehow or other we frequently find
It nice to just chat in the dark.
And if now and then our lips happen to meet,
And he has to clasp me up there,
'Tis owing, of course, to that awkward old seat,
And is not my fault, I declare.



THE ZEPHYR.

Air by R. Bruce.

- “ I have no home and I have no care,
But wander around in the realms of air
To hustle the gnats in a shady lane,
Or rifle the sweets of the floral train.
Ever a vagrant light and free ;
Never a vagrant else like me.
- “ I fan the cheek of the languid fair ;
I nestle an instant 'midst their hair,
And, venturesome aye, from their ruddy lips,
Snatch kisses sweet as a butterfly's sips.
Never a maiden frowns on me :
I am a vagrant zephyr free.
- “ I stir the face of the placid stream,
And mottle the calm of its silver gleam ;
Then, gliding away to the distant deep,
I settle me down on its breast to sleep.
Ever at home on land or sea,
I am a vagrant zephyr free.”



WHISPERING WIND.

Air by R. Bruce.

“ Whispering wind from the far-reaching sea,
Met you his ship where you happened to be ?
Long has my lover’s adventurous sail
Skimmed o’er the billow and courted the gale.
Met you my lover ? Oh ! sent he by thee,
Whispering wind, a kind message to me ?
Whispering wind, bring your message to me.

“ Whispering wind, has the treacherous sea
Snatched in its rage my own true love from me ?
What do you whisper ? Oh ! what do you say ?
Sails my own true love in safety this way ?
What is the message you bring from the sea ?
What is the message you whisper to me ?
Whispering wind, oh ! be truthful to me.”



THE MISTLETOE.

Air by R. Bruce.

Oh, mistletoe,
Long, long ago,
When Britons painted blue,
The Druid’s scythe
Took sacred tithe
From old oak tree of you.

Then shrieks rang loud
O'er savage crowd
From idol's blood-red flame.
The oak is dead,
Those Druids sped,
But you are still the same.
Then hip, hip, hip
For the mystic slip !
Hurrah for the mistletoe !

'Midst Christmas show
'Tis there you glow
O'er festive crowd hung high,
And maidens fair
Feign martyred air
When men to kiss them try.
Your berries white
Flash back the light
On laughing eyes below,
And hearts *are* cold
Which *must* be told
They're 'neath the mistletoe.
Then hip, hip, hip
For the mystic slip !
Hurrah for the mistletoe !



THE FIRST SWALLOW.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

Herald of summer ! hail, swallow ! you're welcome
Back to your home 'neath the sheltering eaves ;
Scarcely has Flora's first pets to each dell come,
Hiding still shyly 'midst pale-tinted leaves.
Chill winds, sleet-laden, may rail at your coming,
Vaunting that winter still reigns o'er the scene ;
Gnats will be whirling, and bees will be humming
Shortly o'er hedgerow, o'er streamlet, and green.

Welcome, blithe swallow, from sunny lands winging
Hither your flight to the land of the free ;
Small repairs needing, your nest is still clinging ;
It, as my roof-tree, is sacred to me.
Bring your mate home, then, the surly winds scorning ;
Seasons change soonest when worst they appear.
Rest well to-night, friend, and fear not the morning,
Summer, with sunshine attending, is near.

**THE MAIDEN SLEEPS.**

The tired maiden soundly sleeps ;
She dreads no morning's call ;
The clamours of her farmyard friends
For her unheeded fall.

All careless of the hints to rise
From swiftly mounting sun,
She dreams not of her parents' wrath
At duties left undone.

She soundly sleeps ; no jealous tear
On pillow trickles down ;
No phantom rival now provokes
A dark, though fleeting frown.
No smile upon her visage plays
Of happy dreamland mirth ;
She has a daisy coverlet
And narrow bed of earth.



NO LONGER STRAY.

In distant lands 'neath torrid ray
No longer stray. Come back ! Come back !
My heart it calls thee day by day ;
The call of Love thou must obey.
Come back ! Come back ! No longer stray !
But hasten, love, o'er billows free,
With eager sails, to joy and me !
Haste, haste, my love, to joy and me !

The summer bloom is fair to see ;
Then why delay ? Come back ! Come back !
My heart is thine ; I'll smile on thee,
And you, my love, shall smile on me.

Come back ! Come back, no more to stray !
The winds blow fair o'er smiling sea ;
Then haste, my love, to joy and me !
Haste, haste, my love, to joy and me !



DOWN WHERE THE POPPIES GROW THICK IN THE CORN.

Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn,
There on the pathway, by footfall scarce worn,
Jessie, dear Jessie, you promised to be
More than the world and its treasures to me.
Nature's own music was ringing, but ah !
Young Love's low whisper was sweeter by far,
Filling our hearts with a rapturous bliss,
Crowned, my own Jessie, by many a kiss.
Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn,
Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn.

Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn,
Oh ! we were happy that bright summer's morn—
Happy as only true lovers may be.
Why were those pleasures so fleeting for me ?
Poppies' bright petals too quickly are shed ;
Joy, like a wind-wafted petal, is fled ;

Memory only, lost Jessie, to me,
Now when I wander aye whispers of thee.
Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn,
Down where the poppies grow thick in the corn.



DOWN IN THE SCENTED LANE.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

At early morn, when the old folks sleep,
Out of the house I steal with Jane,
To gaze, of course, at the cows and sheep,
Down in the scented lane.
I press her hand, and she presses mine ;
Oh ! but we kiss and kiss again !
Few words we say, though our arms entwine,
Down in the scented lane.

The skylark sings in the azure sky ;
Ears have we none for his joyous strain ;
Sweet flowerets gleam, but we pass them by,
Down in the scented lane.
This life is care, so the old men say ;
Never a care have I or Jane ;
For, oh, we love, as the young folks may,
Down in the scented lane.

THE DRAG HUNT.

Air—"Bonny Dundee."

If you'd have some fencing and company, too—
I mean the dear creatures who so love to view
A hunt that is harmless—and also to see
Young fellows in scarlet, why, trot out with me ;
Yes, trot out with me to the outskirts of town,
Where hunters are gathered in tail coat and gown,
Who'll follow on *wheels* while we follow pell-mell
O'er wires well brushed and stiff "railers" a *smell*.

CHORUS.

Then give me a drink and give me a drag,
With plenty stiff fences and sure-jumping nag ;
The soft clouds hang low and the paddocks are green
Hurrah for the hunt of the sweet kerosene !

There are lots of gay hunters in red coats and boots,
With black velvet caps, and beneath them cheroots,
On horses as gay as the gayest young larks,
And oh ! the girls beam on those sporting young sparks.
The soft clouds are floating across the blue sky,
Yet—mind, 'tis Australia—the weather is dry ;
There's talking and laughing, and old hands can tell
There's worse things in life than this hunting a *smell* !

CHORUS—Then give, &c.

The dragsman has started o'er course well laid out,
So as to the finish of course there's no doubt,
Unless you get pounded at awkward big fence—
Small danger of that if you've pluck and good sense ;
But here comes the huntsman, and here comes the pack,
Which, though they the speed of big foxhounds may lack,
Will give tongue like winking and follow right well,
If laid on correctly, a kerosene smell.

CHORUS—Then give, &c.

Hurrah ! we're away ! Take a pull at your nag,
Unless half the hounds and the master you'd bag.
Here's a fence ! Ah ! well over ! A double comes next,
And, though you don't want it, a rail you've annexed.
Just leave it behind you ; 'tis cheaper to buy
Your wood from the woodyard. This creek we must fly.
Hullo ! What's the matter ? Well, this is a sell—
The hounds are at fault on another *sweet smell* !

CHORUS—Then give, &c.

They are laid on again, and are sailing as straight
As flock of wild pigeons. See, here is a gate.
That fence is a rasper ! You'll take it ? Then, see,
Just steady your horse, and be guided by me.
Now, stick him straight at it ; don't funk ; that'll do ;
We're over it flying, though someone may rue
That fence, I am thinking. Yes, Snapper may tell
He was not quite up at the end of the *smell*.

CHORUS—Then give, &c.

The pace is a cracker ; but see, on the roads
 The various wheels are well up with their loads.
 Ah ! that drain I'd forgotten, but scramble out quick,
 The mud will not matter ; you'll yet do the trick.
 Our journey's near ended ; this double's the last,
 And now our drag hunt is a thing of the past ;
 While nothing is hurt save the fellow who fell,
 When we run in and *kill* the late jugative smell.

CHORUS.

Then give me a drink and give me a drag,
 With plenty stiff fences and sure-jumping nag ;
 The soft clouds hang low and the paddocks are green :
 Hurrah for the hunt of the sweet kerosine !

NOTE.—If anyone fancies that aniseed and not kerosene should form the drag—or rather scent it—let them alter the rhyme to suit their fancy, or even make a fresh song.—R. B.



LOVE LANE.

CHEAM, SURREY.

I know a green lane, with old stiles
 And quaint pollard elms at each side,
 Where fond lovers stray in the loitering way
 So pleasant in glad summer-tide ;

O'er moss-covered rails the bright blackberry trails,
And newly-mown hay sheds perfume,
While Love's magic wings hide all soul-vexing things,
And drive away trouble and gloom.

That green lane it leads to the church,
And mischievous Love oft impels
Two innocents in, 'midst the welcoming din
Of sycophant, silver-toned bells.
A plain golden ring is no terrible thing,
Yet potent indeed is its might ;
For Cupid, it seems, from the bright-burnished gleams
Of wedding-rings often takes flight.

Then awkwardly high are those stiles,
All muddy the path, and besides
What nasty things crawl 'mongst the fierce nettles tall
And damp-laden grass at its sides ;
The blackberries' spray has sharp prickles they say ;
That stinging gnats swarm in the air ;
For Love in his flight takes the scales from the sight
Of foolishly happy young pair.



BY THE SEA.

'Neath grey old cliff, on stranded skiff,
My Willie sat with me ;
While soft winds blew and white gulls flew
Above the smiling sea.

We saw, yet saw not, wavelets small,
That rippled on the strand :
We two were bound by Love's sweet thrall
In his enchanted land.

But time has sped, and youth is fled :
My lover, where is he ?
Why, sunk in sleep 'neath mighty deep,
Where seaman's grave should be ;
Yet summer's winds and wavelets small,
They whisper still to me
My Willie's tale of fond delight
Beside that smiling sea.



POLLY AND JACK.

JACK.

“ Oh, Polly, my darling, a craft I have got,
Her skipper I am, do you see ;
So what say you, lass, about sharing my lot,
And sailing with me on the sea ?
The Mary Ann's cabin is fit for a queen ;
She's safer than houses ashore ;
As dewdrop she's fresh ; as a new pin she's clean ;
I love you ! What can I say more ? ”

POLLY.

“ Oh ! dreadful the storms are on ocean’s rude breast,
And frightened I’m sure I should be.”

JACK.

“ You’d just be as safe as a bird in its nest ;
You would not be frightened with *me*.
With Love at the helm, lass, our course would be plain ;
No quicksands or rocks should we find.”

POLLY.

“ Dear Jack, I will venture with you on the sea,
And Providence, sure, will be kind.”

BOTH.

“ A ship on the sea to true lovers may be
A palace and haven of rest ;
We’ll fear not the wind, in rude tempests unkind,
That vex in their rage ocean’s breast.
Then oh for a life on the bonny blue tide,
With Love for our pilot and friend,
Contented and happy together we’ll glide,
United and true to the end !”



WE'RE OFF THE HORN.

We're off the Horn, we're off the Horn,
Where western winds blow strong,
And icebergs glide o'er gloomy tide
In strange, majestic throng.

'Midst driving sleet each tack and sheet
Are thickly frozen round,
Yet cheerily we sail the sea.
Hurrah ! we're homeward bound !

We're off the Horn, we're off the Horn,
Where sea birds, wheeling high,
To stormy sea's rude minstrelsy
A wild fandango fly.

The fog lies low, the deadly floe
Is in our pathway found,
Yet cheerily we sail the sea.
Hurrah ! we're homeward bound !

**WHEN HE RETURNS FROM SEA.**

Air by Robt. Bruce.

When I am waiting for my Joe,
Who sails the stormy deep,
'Tis little rest or peace I know,
Not even when I sleep ;

For then I dream of dreadful storms
That snatch my Joe from me ;
But, oh, the happy times I know
When he returns from sea !

For then I need not slave all day,
I need not grieve all night ;
For Joe is like a sunny ray
That renders all things bright :
He laughs when I of danger talk,
And says that from the sea
He's bound when he has gold enough
To aye return to me.



MY JACK WAS A SAILOR.

A BALLAD.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

My Jack was a sailor, so handsome and true,
The envy of landsmen, the pride of his crew ;
But oh ! o'er the treacherous ocean he's gone ;
I wept when we parted, but now I'm forlorn !

His ship was a clipper ; he said she'd outsail
The swiftest of sea birds, and laugh at the gale ;
But, ah ! to the bottom she went, like a stone,
And I my own true love am left to bemoan !

How happy were we when, a long voyage o'er,
My Jack, with his pockets full, hastened on shore ;
His Sue in her rig should be second to none,
But now, thin and threadbare, his loss I bemoan !

But, ah ! his dear image still sits on my knee—
A brave little Jack who a sailor shall be ;
And though, poor and friendless, I'm left here alone,
I've something to love, while his loss I bemoan !



THE SONG OF THE SEA.

QUESTION.

Oh ! summer sea, thy monotone
Hath magic charm for me,
When wandering by thee alone,
Where I so love to be :
Then wavelet tongues of mighty deep,
In whispers soft and low,
Say, sing ye all of those who sleep
The restless tides below ?

ANSWER.

We sing their story till awake
Rude storm winds hoarse and strong,
When they with foaming billows take
Up, thunder-voiced, the song ;

And while old ocean is their grave,
And tides shall ebb and flow,
Will softly sing, and tempests rave
Of those who sleep below.



A GALE FOR ME.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

The daylight dies in the cloud-capped west,
Where sea and sky in a circle sweep ;
Old ocean's breast is in strange unrest,
Though the waves surge not and the winds all sleep.
The sails they droop from the spars on high,
As I for a strong sou'-wester sigh.
My own true love I am bound for thee.
Then hey ! a piping gale for me !
A gale, a gale, a gale for me !

I hear thy voice in the murmurs soft
Of ocean's sigh and the breezes light ;
I see thine eyes in the stars aloft,
And chide old time for his tardy flight.
The sails they shake as I sigh below
For a welcome western wind to blow.
My own true love I am bound for thee.
Then hey ! a piping gale for me !
A gale, a gale, a gale for me !

Hurrah ! A gust with a roar comes down ;
The bending masts to its fury bow ;
But what care I for the storm king's frown,
She lies her course with a hissing prow.
The wind it howls, but I laugh ho ! ho !
For the sails all draw, and our course we go.
My own true love I am bound for thee.
Then hey ! a piping gale for me !
A gale, a gale, a gale for me !



I'M LONELY 'NEATH THE OLD GUM-TREE.

The twilight fades in darkening skies,
Whence stars peep forth like prying eyes,
And I am waiting here for thee,
Where oft we've met 'neath old gum-tree ;
Amidst its sprays the sighing wind
A pensive sweetheart seems to find.
Oh, Marjory, I sigh for thee !
I'm lonely 'neath the old gum-tree.

The crickets sing, they've company ;
The laughing jacks, they laugh at me ;
The 'possum's happy on the limb,
He has his sweetheart there with him.

Not even moths or beetles fly
Without a sweetheart flitting nigh.
Oh, Marjory, I sigh for thee !
I'm lonely 'neath the old gum-tree.

The curlews, though they sadly wail,
For sweethearts never seem to fail ;
But roam in pairs amid the gloom,
Where sable wattles shed perfume.
I only have no sweetheart, dear,
And long your footsteps light to hear.
Oh, Marjory, I sigh for thee !
I'm lonely 'neath the old gum-tree.



WITHERED LEAVES.

Air by Robt. Bruce.

Leaves of autumn, fallen, widely scattered,
Ghost-like fugitives before the wind,
Emblems are ye of my young hopes shattered,
Bruised and scattered by fate's gales unkind.
'Neath the bright skies of my girlhood's dreaming,
Fair as springtide's tender leaves were they ;
Manifold as summer's glories gleaming—
Like those glories have they passed away.

Leaves of autumn ! In his green grave sleeping
Arthur lies, and I am left to weep ;
Heedless Time for me is coldly creeping,
While beside him I so long to sleep :
Yet, like young leaves in due season springing,
Where it withered, hope springs in my heart,
Gentle comfort to my spirit bringing—
I shall meet him, never more to part.



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH.

In quiet village, busy town,
Through our adopted land,
True women, garbed in russet brown,
Seek hopefully a heavenly crown
At their Great Master's hand.

For sorrow and for misery
They search with anxious care ;
No sinners vile they hurry by
With cruel scorn or frowning eye,
But help their woes to bear.

With pleasant words, with loving hearts,
They do their Master's will ;
With gentle hands they soothe the smarts
Of fell disease's rankling darts
That but for them would kill.

With steady faith they onward go
With wretchedness to cope ;
The orphan's pain, the widow's woe,
Are softened by their ready flow
Of charity and hope.

No trumpet blast with flourish loud
They sound to tell their worth ;
But quietly amidst the crowd
They meekly glide, with visage bowed,
To do His work on earth.

Then honour show them everywhere,
Whate'er your creed or birth ;
These gentle souls, whose kindly care
Both innocent and wicked share,
Angels are they of earth.



AS TRANSIENT RIPPLES WE.

We sit beside the sunlit stream,
And watch its ripples bright,
That for an instant's space will gleam,
To vanish from our sight ;

When other ripples in their place
But glance to disappear,
And yet to us that streamlet's face
The self-same look will bear.

And so it is with river wide
Which ever onward flows ;
We cast a ripple on its tide
Of mingled joys and woes.

The rich, the poor, the meek, the proud,
The lowly born, and king ;
Each is a ripple in the crowd,
A briefly noticed thing.

The king may ripple in the light,
The pauper in the gloom ;
But each as speedily from sight
Is lost within the tomb.

And still flows on the human stream,
Its ripples past forgot ;
For careless present ripples gleam
As if they'd rippled not.

Then ye who think, with senseless pride,
Without you could not flow
The stream that seeks the "darksome tide,"
Your value truly know !

THEN AND NOW.

THE CHARGE OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE.

'Twas merrie to fight for St. George and right,
 Or wrong as the case might be,
 In feudal broil on Old England's soil,
 Or eke in a far countree,
 When good brown-bill it was swung to kill,
 When bolts from the cross-bows flew,
 And men-at-arms stout with a lusty shout
 Themselves on their foemen threw.

'Twas sword to sword on the trampled sward,
 Or battle-axe, spear, or mace,
 In open fight by the broad daylight,
 With warriors face to face ;
 Yet many a knight, in his corselet bright,
 If cast in a stalwart mould,
 Might revel in war till of years threescore,
 And die in his own strong hold ;

'Twas different far in the Transvaal war,
 When stormed was that gun-crowned height,
 'Gainst bullet and shell of a flaming hell,
 But never a foe in sight ;
 Oh, never a foe, so no last good blow
 Might solace a gallant Celt,
 When giving his life in the hopeless strife
 Away on that cursed veldt.

Then here's to the brave in their silent grave,
And here's to the brave who live ;
For fame can't boast a more valiant host,
Nor a fitting guerdon give :
Yes, Death was there on a kopje bare,
And laughed 'midst the horrid din,
When steady as tide to his floodgates wide
Those glorious Scots swept in.

February 4, 1900.



THOSE BLACK-COATED CROAKERS.

By Tugela River the cannon's loud roar
Rolls down from rough kopje and back from the shore ;
For Boer and British are there face to face,
And each finds the other a mighty hard case.
Yes, backed up by trenches and nasty barbed wire,
The enemy's gunners incessantly fire ;
But find Buller's shells like a hailstone from—well,
A certain hot shop with sulphurous smell.

CHORUS.

Then stand to your guns as if it were fun—
T. Atkins as Thomas you ever have done ;
For Roberts is there, and I'll wager that he
Will soon be on top as you quickly shall see.

There are black-coated croakers who live by their prayers,
And gauge other's conduct by standard of theirs,
Who'd have us believe that a judgment has come
To shrill note of pipe and the rattle of drum ;
But don't you believe them ; for trifling reverse
Is neither a knock-out nor caused by God's curse,
And so, 'stead of crying and praying for aid,
Let's go for the Boers as if 'twere our trade.

CHORUS—Then stand, &c.

If route straight to Ladysmith means certain death,
We'd better expend more exertion and breath
By trying some other through Orange Free State,
Which is to the Transvaal a wide open gate ;
For then, 'stead of Cronje and trenches to storm,
We'll make things for Kruger uncommonly warm,
And show foreign cut-throats who fight for the foe
The shortest of routes to hot regions below.

CHORUS—Then stand, &c.

We've had some hard knocks, but the British before
Have borne what foes gave them, then settled the score ;
And here be it known that the British to-day
Are just as enduring and plucky as they.
Then shame on the subjects of peerless Queen Vic,
Who holes in the coat of the nation would pick ;
But e'en let them whimper like well-beaten curs,
We'll go in and win, boys, in spite of their slurs.

CHORUS—Then stand, &c.

February 14th, 1901.

ERIN AND HER CHILDREN.

That ancient gem, St. Patrick's Land,
The emerald of song,
Is set by Great Creator's hand
Atlantic waves among ;
And when 'tis calm they ripple round,
With music low and sweet ;
'Neath tempest's scourge, with thund'rous sound,
They on her bulwarks beat.

Her exiles for Old Erin pray
In foreign lands afar,
For she to them by night and day
Is sacred guiding star :
Where'er they be, on land or sea,
Their hearts are with her still—
Their much-loved home, where'er they roam,
Is she, and ever will.

That lovely isle with verdant gleam
Enchants the poet's sight,
When pasture, hill, and wood, and stream
Are bathed in God's clear light.
Yes, search you may the vast world round,
Wherever winds may blow,
And fairer land shall not be found
A summer's sun below.

Renowned the isle where piety
And ancient learning dwelt,
Whose children to the Deity
'Midst pagan nations knelt ;
Whose daughters still the palm can claim
For virtue pure as gold ;
While brightly on the scroll of fame
Her sons' brave deeds are told.

Yet hard has been the lot indeed
Of Erin's ancient race,
Whose blood oft stained her sod so green
To England's black disgrace ;
But England's sons as brothers brave
Old Erin's sons must claim,
And base would be the traitor knave
Who'd kindle discord's flame.

Then here's to brave Old Ireland,
Her boys and colleens fair,
And here's to valiant hero band
Will soon the shamrock wear ;
Good fortune may her children know,
And presently be seen
Round shamrock bound, with loving bow,
The orange and the green.

March 18, 1900.



BE ASY, PAT! BE ASY, TIM!

See, Pat, my boy, you want to make
In Erin's Isle the laws ;
Yet Tim's black pate you'd like to break
In Irish friendship's cause.
A Protestant, of course, is Tim,
While, Pat, you go to Mass ;
But sure Tim's soul belongs to him ;
Then wherefore, Pat, be crass.

You know the fable of the sticks
That breakable were found,
Though proof against all force and tricks
While in the faggot bound ;
Then bind yourselves together, lads ;
Your rival colours twine ;
And, casting forth old hate and fads,
For common cause combine.

Now, Pat and Tim, you love the sod
On which you both were bred ;
Then friends be for the love of God,
By cause of Erin led.
And when one's bound to Sunday Mass,
To church or chapel t'other,
Just shake hands when you chance to pass
As brother should with brother.

March 20th, 1900.

TO THE DUBLIN FUSILIERS.

A regiment old has been enrolled
For twice one hundred years ;
Its rank and file—true Irish style—
Are Dublin Fusiliers.

Yes, Fusiliers, who'll brook no jeers ;
Who march at duty's call ;
And in the fight, by day or night,
Will win or bravely fall.

They've fought in white, in scarlet bright,
They fought in khaki brown ;
They've changed their name twice, thrice, yet fame
Still claims them for her own.
With flying years those Fusiliers
As mortal men must fly ;
But from the foe ! those Dubs ? Oh, no !
They'll conquer or they'll die.

By brother-Celts, in tartan kilts,
With bagpipe's pibroch shrill,
The Dubs have fought as if 'twere sport
On blood-drenched plain and hill ;
'Midst fever swamps, in sun-scorched camps,
By icy rigours chilled.
In war's stern game they're aye the same,
With dauntless courage filled.

Those Fusiliers, whom Erin rears
To be her pride and boast
On land and sea, must also be
Their brother-Britons' toast.
Then "Here's the Dubs! the gallant Dubs!"
True heroes they in war;
So join with me in three times three—
"The Dubs! Hip! hip! hurrah!"

March 24, 1900.



THE VALE OF TEARS.

A beautiful sphere is our home while here,
That whirls in its sun-lit air;
Yet many a one ere his race is run
Is crushed by a dull despair—
Yes, a dull despair, which is hard to bear,
And sin, with its clinging dye,
To cowering crowds bring their storm-fraught clouds,
Aye, e'en 'neath the brightest sky.

Said the ancient seers, "'Tis a vale of tears
That leadeth from birth to grave;"
But, trodden aright, it may yield delight
To those who are kind and brave:

To the kind and brave, not the sordid knave
That deemeth his friend a fool,
But measures his deeds through his neighbour's needs
By merciful golden rule.

Not even the ring of bright gold can bring
Content to a churlish mind ;
While poverty's smart for a cheerful heart
Must part with its sting unkind :
Yes, part with its sting must that haunting thing
When drawn by a heartfelt mirth,
Which often will flee from a proud grandee,
Yet dwell by a cottage hearth.

To shadowy bourne whence none may return
We pass like an ebbing tide,
And the young will think that the old must sink
Right soon in the river wide :
In the river wide, but its deeps untried
By a babe may first be crossed,
And the old remain with a bitter pain
To mourn for the loved one lost.

But why should we mourn for a soul new-born ?
And why should we fear to tread
The valley of death, with its ebbing breath,
That leads to a dreamless bed ?
To a dreamless bed, for when soul has sped—
We trust to a better land—
Our body shall rest in the peaceful breast
Of earth with a peaceful band.

Then never to fear yield your soul while here,
But face with a courage high
Those troubles which threat in life's path, but yet,
If manfully met, will fly :
Yes, trouble will fly from a steadfast eye,
So, 'spite of those ancient seers,
Let's journey along with a mirthful song
Through beautiful vale of tears.

March 28, 1900.



TO A YOUNG SWALLOW.

THAT, WHEN LEAVING ITS NEST UNDER THE ROOF OF A CITY OFFICE, STRAYED
INTO A VENTILATOR IN THE WALL AND PERISHED THERE.

Poor little bird ! you came from parent's nest,
By instinct led, on buoyant wings to glide ;
But 'gainst those bars, all impotently pressed,
To gain sweet freedom, cruelly denied !
Outside your fellows winged unfettered flight,
As free themselves as God's bright, ambient air ;
While you, a prey to hunger and to fright,
All helpless died a hopeless captive there.

But Fate to mortals oft is more unkind :
Your time of suffering was sharp and brief ;
While theirs, of body and of soul combined,
Is long drawn out and painful past belief.

From hopeless birth to hopeless death they go ;
In fevered slums a prey to every pain ;
Their hearts oppressed by all-absorbing woe,
From which through life they respite cannot gain.

Sad waifs and strays, 'twere better far that they
At dawn of life the keener pang should feel ;
From want and sin be early called away,
At Throne of Grace for peace to make appeal :
And you, poor mite, with folded pinions there,
A creditor may be to early death ;
For even birds through life sharp troubles bear,
Like all things else that draw the vital breath.



INVADERS BEWARE !

DEDICATED TO THE IRISH CORPS.

“Should war be declared,” quoth brave Barney McGrath,
“’Twixt England and Russia, their warships
Would steam to the lighthouse, then over the bar
Right up to Portonian’s doorsteps.
Then where would we be—the *Protector* at sea,
With Creswell and crew on a cruise, sir ?
Why, flat on our backs, while the Russians made tracks
With bullion from banks and the Jews, sir !”

“ Yes, Barney agra, you are right, so you are,”
Cried Larry O’Grady, the bold one ;
“ So let us go drill, and, by jabers, we will _
Knock horns, hoofs, and tail off the Old One !
The Russians and French ! Oh, we’d dig a big trench,
And pepper them well from its shelter,
Till sorra a one would delay for the fun,
But trot to their ships helter-skelter !

“ Then next thing there’d be a big battle on sea,
For Creswell would meet them and beat them ;
Just round up their ships and reduce them to chips,
So ’s tender-toothed sea worms could eat them.
Now, Barney, me boy, let us rifles employ,
Till never a foe will in sight be,
And Salisbury say, in his jocular way,
‘ Ye divils, I’ll just have to knight ye ! ’ ”

Thus spoke those brave boys of a rifleman’s joys,
And, presto, ’twas done ; and we’ve got, sir,
A grand Irish Corps that in case of a war
Will make things uncommonly hot, sir ;
So Russians, beware, and all Froggies take care,
For Creswell, and Sandy, and Pat ’ll—
With permanent force and policemen, of course—
Just knock you clean out in one battle.

March 26, 1900.

TRUE UNTO DEATH.

An incident of the Colenso battlefield, recorded in the *Southern Cross* of March 23.

“Please tend *him* first ; he’s harder hit than me,”
The wounded soldier said in husky tones,
When stricken down by fatal bullet he,
With life fast ebbing, heard his comrade’s moans :
Yes ; lying there, ‘neath Afric’s scorching sun,
Parched by its heat and fever of his wound,
A noble victory that hero won,
For which hereafter surely he’ll be crowned.

Not Dives self, amidst tormenting flame,
Could long more ardently his thirst to sate
Than that young Briton, who forbore his claim
To proffered water, thus to soothe his mate.
He begged that drink for him he loved so well,
And wrestled hard with agonising pain.
His friend still lives pathetic tale to tell,
While faithful comrade slumbers with the slain.

He loved his neighbour better than himself,
That patient sufferer, who else might be
As wild a lad as ever fought for pelf,
Or pierced the secret of futurity.
He might be wild, I now repeat, but then
A truer Christian never marched in line,
And when I leave the company of men
For spirit land may such as his meet mine !

March 31, 1900.

THE BRAVE NUNS OF MAFEKING.

No paladins they of a mighty mould
That battles have fought and won,
But never has fame in her pride e'er told
Of warriors now or in days of old
Who nobler deeds have done.

A merciful mission is theirs while here,
And yet, 'midst the fiercest strife,
'Tis there they will be, with never a fear,
Though threatening Death in grim guise stalks near,
While horrors of war are rife.

Yes ; cannons may roar, and their shell and shot
Like terrible tempest fly :
They stand to their posts and they falter not,
For 'tis with the wounded they've cast their lot,
Prepared with their charge to die.

They ready alway are to soothe the pain
Of many a soldier brave,
Who'd otherwise sigh for a nurse in vain
To skilfully treat, and to pray to gain
Them respite brief from the grave.

In the sun's fierce heat, in the dead of night,
While many around them fall,
They fight in the cause that they know is right,
Unheeding the murderous missile's flight,
For they serve the Lord of All !

Then honour on earth and a crown indeed,
Whenever their souls take wing,
Be theirs who are ready in time of need
To strive for their Master by word and deed,
Like the Nuns of Mafeking !

April 10, 1900.



THE DUBLIN FUSILIERS ARE ORDERED HOME.

“Owing to the sadly depleted condition of their ranks, the 1st and 2nd Battalions Royal Dublin Fusiliers have been ordered to return home.”—
News item.

From continent dark they are ordered back,
From desperate charge, and from ambushed track,
Those few who remain of the hardy band
Who yesterday sailed from their native land,
When flags flew free and hurrahs rang out
For regiment renowned to the war *en route* ;
And now who shall share in the smiles and tears,
Will welcome return of those Fusiliers ?

They are ordered home from that distant shore
To dear little Emerald Isle once more—
The isle they have dreamed of in tents afar,
When the night winds sighed o’er the slain in war,
And the Boers’ cannons the silence broke ;
While never a war-worn soldier woke,
But deemed in his sleep that he heard the cheers.
Re-echo again for the Fusiliers !

They are ordered home, but many will lie
'Neath the blood-drenched veldt, by the kopjes high,
Whence thundered those tempests which none might face,
Unless they were sprung from a dauntless race.
There the Dubs charged home, as the Dubs were told,
And their forefathers have from days of old ;
While clarion fame through the coming years
Shall tell of those glorious Fusiliers !

April 21, 1900.



THE LADS OF THE IRISH CORPS.

Great Homer sang in the bygone years
Of warriors fierce and strong,
Who, shaking their spears, with boasts and jeers,
In chariots rolled along.
With loosened rein, o'er the corpse-strewn plain,
Those merciless cut-throats tore ;
But give me my pick, and I'd take brave Mick
And Pat of the Irish Corps.

CHORUS.

The Irish Corps that's bound to score,
In piping peace, and in time of war.
Then here's to the lads, with Irish dads,
Who march in the Irish Corps !

Old Homer's heroes had boundless pride
In armour that gleamed with gold,
While tough bull's-hide o'er their bucklers wide
Was stretched in many a fold.
Those quarrelsome lads claimed gods for their dads,
And ever were seeking gore ;
But still I would back, when the rifles crack,
Our boys of the Irish Corps.

CHORUS—The Irish Corps, &c.

They love the land where the shamrock grows
With a love that is deep and true ;
But plundering foes who may come for blows
Shall Irish valour rue.
Oh ! never a fear but they'll all be there,
With a pluck that sure must score—
The rank and file of the famous isle
Who march in the Irish Corps.

CHORUS—The Irish Corps, &c.

Though born and bred in this vast new land,
Hibernians yet they'll be ;
But still they will stand with heart and hand
'Neath the flag on land and sea :
Yes, sturdily fight for home and right,
And first in a time of war
They'll ever be seen in their tunics green,
Our boys of the Irish Corps.

CHORUS.

The Irish Corps that's bound to score,
In piping peace or in time of war.
Then here's to the lads, with Irish dads,
Who march in the Irish Corps !

April 14, 1900.



SOLDIERS OF THE KING.

A nation, like young giant, to a lusty prime has sprung,
In smiling land of plenty where fair Liberty holds sway ;
A nation come of heroes whose grand deeds have oft been
sung
In verdant little islands in the ocean far away :
Yes, British homes of Shamrock, of the Thistle, and the
Rose,
Whose children where they wander to their kindred fondly
cling ;
And now, in conscious vigour, sally forth to fight their foes,
Hardy horsemen, bold as lions, stalwart Soldiers of the
King !

CHORUS.

We are proud of boys in khaki who respond to
duty's call,
Who will fight their foemen bravely, who will
stand their ground with all.

Come of heroes, truly heroes, are our Sandy, Pat,
and John,
And they'll answer to the bugle when there's
battles to be won ;
Yes, they'll follow, ever follow, where the grand
old flag may fly,
To keep its honour spotless, or to know the reason
why ;
So we'll tell them how we trust them, and our
cheers shall loudly ring
For those Austral boys in khaki, fearless Soldiers of
the King !

'Mongst hills where blooms the wattle, and where sparkling
streamlets flow,
They leave their wives and sweethearts for the saddle,
sword, and gun :
Oh ! they go from bushland lonely where the myalls
whisper low
To storm the frowning kopje where a V.C. 's to be won.
Some have fought for Queen and country ; all will fight,
true, dauntless men,
'Gainst Boers brave and aliens De Wet may chance to
bring.
Then hurrah for hardy heroes whom we hope to see again,
When they come back crowned with honour proven
Soldiers of the King.

CHORUS—We are proud of boys in khaki, &c.

LEAP YEAR.

IN VERY SHORT METRE.

One day
A pair—
He gay,
She fair—
The breeze
Beside
The sea's
Salt tide
Enjoyed
And toyed.

Said Jane,
“ Dear Ned,
I fain
Would wed ;
Leap-year
'Tis now ;
So, here
I vow,
I'll wed
Thee, Ned.”

Said he,
“ My dear,
For me,
I fear
Too gay

You'd prove.
Good day,
My love !
You'll wed
Not Ned ! ”

MORAL.

From this
True tale
Each Miss
Don't fail
To be
Well warned ;
For she
Is scorned
Who tries,
Like Jane,
A prize
To gain.
Beware !
Take care !



AN ECHO.

An old man to the altar led
A gay and frisky lass ;
Then afterwards, like Echo, said,
A-las ! A-las ! A-las !

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE LONDON.

In winter's prime, by London river, view
The stately steamship : her attentive crew,
From busy docks, through gates thrown open wide,
Warp, with due caution, to the dark flood-tide :
She slowly glides, her every motion scanned
By gazing concourse on adjacent land ;
And harbourmaster, loud-voiced and alert,
Who can his brief authority assert
And orders give, which, brooking no delay,
With prompt alacrity the tars obey :
At 'mid-stream buoy his duty ends, and he
To pilot leaves her passage to the sea.

With mighty force anon the eager steam
The huge ship urges o'er the turbid stream,
With slow commencement, till inertia vast
Becomes momentum, and for speed is cast ;
While last farewells upon the wintry wind
Are faintly borne from wharf, left far behind,
Where loving eyes are fondly strained to keep
In view dear friends who dare the stormy deep ;
Kind Fortune's smiles to court in southern land,
Where plenty waits the willing heart and hand ;
Where golden grain and fruitful vineyards share
The toiler's labour, and reward his care ;
A pleasant land, yet still their hearts shall dwell
In dear Old England they have loved so well.

With steady skill the waterman who steers
The vessel guides amidst the crowded tiers
Of lesser ships, whose lofty hamper shows
Like wintry forest with incumbent snows
On leafless branches, for on taper spars
The wind-worn sails are folded by the tars,
Who oft have spread them to the welcome blast,
When strained the cordage and inclined the mast.

Where glides the *London* mark each good ship's crew
Its bulwarks swarm that stately craft to view,
And scan with keen, discriminating eyes,
Her graceful lines, her gear aloft, and size ;
Then argufy, as British seamen will,
Anent her passage and her captain's skill.
No evil portents to their vision loom
To augur wreck and mortals early doom.
No ! gold and skill too largely have combined
To leave *her* subject to the sea unkind.
But man is blind, and what may her befall
Is known to HIM, and HIM alone, whose call
Can wake the cyclone, and in chaos heap
O'erwhelming billows of the boundless deep.

Old twin-piered Gravesend is attained, and now
The anchor plunges from her lofty bow,
While from the deck, where folded it has lain,
Through sounding hawse-pipe flies the massive
chain,
Whose mimic thunder, in a rattling roar,
With mocking echoes rolls along the shore,

Whence wherries launch and, o'er the brackish tide
By oarsmen urged, to anchored vessel glide,
To swell the crowds that on the good ship surge,
To cabins dive, or, rabbit-like emerge,
Obstructing all, till glad the crew will be
To find their good ship from that concourse free.

Now grimy stokers, Cyclops-like, once more
The fuel heap, and bid the red flamés roar
In iron furnaces, to quickly raise
The toiling giant of these modern days—
Which water bred by all-consuming fires,
Like serpent hisses, and in den perspires,
Impatient all to drive with matchless force
The noble vessel on her trackless course,
While rolling smoke that streams from funnel
 high,
Like sable banner floats 'neath sullen sky.

The clearance gained, and anchor well aweigh,
No longer now can ling'ring friends delay
Their partings sad ; yet still with wish to cheer
They smiling gaze, in either eye a tear,
And tell of hope in shaking tones which thrill,
As if from hearts presaging deadly ill.
Then seek their skiffs, and on the vessel's deck
The form familiar fades to dusky speck,
Soon lost to view, for, urged by mighty steam,
With speedy prow the *London* cleaves the stream,
Her grand old ensign gleaming darkly through
The smoky cloud that jealously from view

Conceals her hull, though still distinct and clear
Above it shows her lofty, taper gear ;
This, too, with distance disappears, and then,
Save ebon streak, nought greets the gazer's ken.

In far-famed Nore the shrill-voiced icy blast
From Downs sweeps up through night shades
 falling fast,
With might increasing ; while 'neath leaden sky
The wind-rent storm-clouds, in a wild wrack, fly
Like routed fugitives from deadly strife
That dog their footsteps with destruction rife,
And warning give to those who on the deep,
'Midst rocks and shoals, their anxious vigils keep ;
And so the captain, versed in Nature's signs,
All thoughts of progress for the time resigns ;
At least till morning o'er the narrow sea
Shall shed its light, or winter winds be free.
His will expressed the skilful pilot hears,
Then for safe holding ground the vessel steers ;
While toiling engines their endeavours stay
And sullen rest, when, slowly losing way,
The ship sweeps on till, at commanding word,
A sudden roar and heavy plunge is heard ;
And once again amid the waves which glide,
Then swelling upward lap the good ship's side,
She anchored lies : the while, with clamours loud,
The steam escaping forms a fleecy cloud,
Which, freed from bondage, yields its matchless
 might
And flies to consort with the dews of night.

The evening wanes, the anchor watch is set,
And in the cabin passengers are met
At loaded tables, where the viands vie
With snowy napery to please the eye ;
And pendant lamps, that shine with mellow
light,

Bid comfort reign, and scare the dreary night.

When weary voyagers retire to rest
What novel fancies agitate each breast !
For all is strange ; and, though intrudes not fear,
Disturbing noises from the night they hear—
The piping shrill of gale through pendent
blocks ;

The fretful splash, and oft-recurring shocks
Of restless waves which in the darkness roll
O'er winding channel and ensnaring shoal ;
While measured strokes upon resounding bell
Of time's slow flight with loud precision tell.
Then on the deck above their heads with slow
And ling'ring tread, parading to and fro,
The watch is heard, whose duty 'tis to keep
A piercing eye upon surrounding deep,
Where lofty shapes 'midst gloomy shades glide-
past,

Like shrouded ghosts before the moaning blast ;
Bright orbs of flame—red, green, and glowing,
white—

Their advent herald, while phosphoric light
Gleams coldly forth from out the yeasty flakes
Of dancing foam which gather in their wakes ;

They swiftly speed ; for them the wind is free ;
Their port near gained ; the wreck-engulfing sea
Devoid of terrors, till they sail away
To brave new dangers on some future day :
With cheerful zeal their seamen pull and haul,
And answer promptly to each duty's call ;
For with the morrow slavish hardship ends,
And hey for homes, for sweethearts, wives, and
friends !

The Sabbath dawns ; the sullen sun once more
With feeble beams illumines sea and shore ;
Yet, adverse still, above the foaming waves
The gale protracted through the rigging raves ;
Still flies the scud beneath forbidding skies,
And warning gives to seamen—weather-wise—
Of warring elements, with danger fraught
To reckless captains who would leave their port.
These evil signs the careful pilot notes,
And one more day, with deep regret, devotes
To dull inaction ; then, with new-born year,
Upon her voyage he the ship will steer.

The lagging hours of winter night are past,
And inactivity aside is cast ;
For long ere landsmen leave their beds the crew
Are loudly called their duty to renew ;
They rouse the steam, the anchor weigh again,
When, greatly urged, the vessel stems the main.
And seaside towns, to pleasure-seekers dear,
In turn are viewed, in turn to disappear,

Till Goodwin Sands, so oft the greedy grave
Of gallant vessels and their seamen brave,
Are safely passed, and o'er the dark green tide
The Isle of Wight looms grandly in its pride ;
While glancing sails of good ships homeward
bound,

Like sea-mews, hover o'er the waves around,
Whose rising fury and the gale combined
Bar further progress with a force unkind,
And drive the ship to anchor once again
Where stands St. Helen's by subservient main.

When in the east the frowning shades of night
Confess the advent of the dawn's first light,
The good ship, urged by willing steam, once more
To brave fresh dangers quits the friendly shore.
Great foaming waves her briny pathway strew
With sudden garlands of a snowy hue ;
Where to and fro, engaged in gambols rude,
Before her glide the uncouth porpoise brood,
Whose waving tails their sole propulsion find,
Yet wrest the palm from urging steam and wind.
With graceful ease they spurn the yielding main,
Sport here and there, and still the lead maintain.
Loud laugh the landsmen at the novel show—
Too well its meaning hardy seamen know ;
For is it not an augury unkind
Of foaming billows and a stormy wind ?

The Needle Rocks, which centuries have stood,
In stern defiance of assaulting flood,

Are slowly passed, and to the open main
The *London* steams but to be foiled again ;
For, toiling hard, through adverse seas she
 ploughs,
Whose leaping billows scale her plunging bows ;
Strong, gusty foes assail her rigging high,
While screaming gulls from rising tempest fly
To rock-bound coast, where, with incessant roar,
The breakers thunder on the rugged shore.
The pilot, warned by these forbidding signs,
For Spithead now to steer the ship designs :
She slowly wears ; then, like a startled steed
On verdant meadow, flies with doubled speed ;
The partial wind seems shorn of half its might ;
The crested waves scarce catch her in her flight ;
From side to side her taper spars incline
With graceful sweep toward the flashing brine ;
While far astern in undulating line
Bright, seething foamflakes on the waters shine,
And outlines rude of rocky coast appear
To change in form ; cliffs rise to disappear :
For, urged to speed by wedded steam and sail,
She rides the billows and outstrips the gale.

The sunset gun along the gusty shore
From frowning fortress sends its booming roar,
When steers the *London* to the harbour where
Old England's fleets for threatened war prepare ;
But night, fast falling, spreads her dusky shroud
O'er naval stronghold and its busy crowd,

And soon the *London* on the guarded deep
Quiescent lies, and those within her sleep.

When slowly past two cheerless days are sped,
And morning's light upon the port is shed,
Forth steams the vessel, once more bound to
fight

With wintry gales and waves' remorseless might.
Through gloomy day and starless night she flies,
Till twilight gleams in chilly eastern skies ;
Then through the mists which, curling, float
around

They dimly see the mouth of Plymouth Sound,
Whence sweeps a cutter o'er the angry sea,
Puts down her helm and rounds-to on the lee,
Where, bounding buoyantly on billows high,
A picture she to please a seaman's eye :
Her lofty sails reflect the morning light ;
Her copper sheathing glitters redly bright ;
Her beam is broad, a press of sail to stand
When, windward beating, she would leave the
land ;

Her entry sharp to cleave the heaving brine ;
Her lengthy floors from kelson steep incline
To swelling bends, lest adverse angle may
Dead water gather to impede her way ;
Her long, clean run allows the parted tide
'Neath rounded counter easily to glide,
To meet again enwreathed with snowy spray,
As when lithe dolphins through the ocean play—

With graceful ease the waters they divide—
The swiftest racers in the azure tide.
From davits now, at cutter's stern, behold
A boat descend to bear two pilots bold,
Whose brawny arms the bending paddles ply,
While wind and sea their skill and courage try ;
For low in trough, then high on summit green
Of foaming billow is the small craft seen :
Till, ah ! what pain excites each anxious breast !
For, rushing onward, with aggressive crest,
It whirls the boat, involved in foam, on high,
And overturns it as it thunders by !

“ Lower the lifeboat ! ” Captain Martin cries.
To urgent call each eager seaman flies.
With ready hands the gear they overhaul ;
The sheaves, revolving, lengthen fast each fall :
They ply their oars, of tough and pliant ash ;
The rowlocks rattle and the oar-blades flash :
“ Pull with a will ! ” the ardent steersman cries—
The strong ash buckles, and the lifeboat flies—
Alas ! too slow to save one seaman brave :
The raging sea must now become his grave.
Through startled brain, like vivid lightnings,
gleam
His past and present in a waking dream.
One cry he gives for mercy to his soul,
One thought to home ; and then the billows roll
With sullen fury o'er that manly form
That oft has braved them in the fiercest storm ;

Invading torrents force the spirit's flight,
And seal his senses in an endless night !
But on, brave mariners, if ye would save
A brother seaman from untimely grave ;
For stoutly still he battles hard for life—
Not yet the sea is victor in the strife ;
A floating oar tenaciously he grasps,
By brine tormented when for breath he gasps :
The leaping waves on him with fury pour,
And seem to claim him with resounding roar ;
The cruel winds his fierce assailants urge ;
The driving spray becomes a knotted scourge ;
Cold, icy fingers grasp his fainting heart,
And Death approaching seems to launch his
dart.

Courage, brave pilot, for one moment more !
With iron grasp clutch fast the buoyant oar !
For see, advancing on that lofty wave,
The lifeboat flies to save thee from the grave !
Bowman, prepare his sinking form to seize !
Oarsmen, your labours for an instant ease !
Steersman, be skilful, and yet cool withal !
One ill-judged movement and ye ruin all !
Back-water, hard ! Hurrah ! From out the wave
Strong arms now lift him, and forestall the grave !
Then, hoping still his comrade yet to find,
They row around, but fate no more is kind :
In vain they search ; his earthly pain is past ;
The deep his grave ; his dirge the howling blast.

When fruitless all would be protracted stay,
The gallant tars reluctantly obey
The captain's signal to return on board,
With him whose life they hardly have restored,
Whom now they question of his comrade, dead—
“ Will helpless orphans want for daily bread ?
Will loving wife his step await in vain,
Who ne'er shall glad her longing sight again ? ”
While he, replying, answers “ Yes ” or “ No.”
For now the *London* with extended row
Of passengers, who line her lofty rail,
Looms overhead, and screens them from the
gale.

Beneath the falls at once they heedful glide,
And nimble seamen scale the vessel's side,
Save those who hook the tackles and prepare
The boat to steady as she mounts in air ;
For steam, resistless, lends the needful strain,
And to the davits soon she swings again.

With hollow splash the screw the water spurns,
Which, foam evolving, round her rudder churns :
Her speedy prow soon points toward the land,
Which, high before her, parts on either hand,
A passage leaving for the flowing tide,
'Midst lofty hills, to curves wherein to hide ;
While from the shore, towards the south, appears
A massive pier—the work of toilsome years—
Of huge stones built, and based on solid rocks,
It braves, unshaken, ocean's fiercest shocks ;

For baffled waves and snowy spume recoil,
In whirling eddies, round its base to boil :
On seaward end there stands a lighthouse high—
A welcome sight to those who storms would fly
To welcome anchorage, where oft-times meet
In peaceful times the ships of England's fleet ;
And thither now the *London* swiftly glides,
With graceful sweep, and at her anchor rides.

By rivals urged toward the vessel's side,
The restless shore-boats skim the heaving tide
To bring those voyagers who viewed with dread
The Channel passage, with fell dangers spread
When wintry gales with sullen fury roar,
And breakers thunder on the wild lee-shore ;
And those who, loth to leave their homes, delay
The painful parting to the latest day.

From foremast high "blue peter" flutters free
To summon those who still on shore may be ;
And all is ready—fatal *Friday* passed—
To brave once more the billows and the blast.

From daily path the sun has hurried down,
Pursued by night, devoid of starry crown ;
And darkness falls on winding sound and land
To hide the beach and objects near at hand ;
While in their stead unnumbered lights appear
Along the shore and on the shipping near,

Whose constant flames like glowing planets shine,
Their beams reflected in the heaving brine ;
While, brighter far than rival lights around,
The seawall beacon flashes o'er the Sound—
A certain guide to skilful seamen's sight
Who seek to gain or leave the port by night.

In spacious cabins of the *London* shine
Resplendent lamps in long extended line
Above the guests, now once more met around
The social board, with smiling plenty crowned ;
On snowy cloths the varied dishes steam,
And sparkling wines in polished crystal gleam,
While kindly hope and comfort join to cheer
All lonely hearts, and banish lurking fear ;
But now to sea the ship is steaming out,
And heaving waters soon the diners rout.

From straining vision of the favoured few
Exempt from sickness fast recedes from view
The cloud-like streak—last glimpse of England's
shore—
That much-loved land they ne'er may visit more ;
And now 'tis lost, for ocean's wide expanse,
With scattered sails, is all that meets the glance ;
'Tis ocean, too, for treachery renowned ;
The die is cast, the ship is outward bound.

The daylight wanes, anon the winter's night
In turn is banished by the source of light,

And Sabbath dawns, but not in peace, for o'er
The trackless waste wind's gusty forces roar,
And to their call huge swelling billows rise,
Like foam-crowned giants, to insult the skies,
Or on the ship, which forward slowly ploughs,
To fiercely bound and break above her bows ;
Or aft the mainmast, with a constant din,
O'er futile bulwarks rush impetuous in.

On lagging wing the night has sped away,
And Monday dawns—a wild and stormy day—
Though still the voyagers, in cabins warm,
From sound and motion only judge the storm,
While hardy mariners but little reck
The wet discomforts of the wave-washed deck.
To stop the engines Martin gives command,
And in the rigging swarm an active band
Of gallant seamen to unloose each sail,
Which, sheeted home, stands stiffly to the gale.
With lessened motion soon the ship careers,
But from her course a spreading angle steers,
While groaning passengers who lie below
Are victims sad to landsmen's dreaded foe ;
But pity scant they from their comrades find—
The stewards deaf, their *favoured* friends inclined
To leave the patients to *imagined* care,
So mount the poop to breathe the bracing air.
The noontide past, the gale with lessened force
O'er ocean hurries in its viewless course ;
And though the waves are monstrous as before,
They foaming break with less aggressive roar,

While scattered sunbeams, cheering while they last,
A passing glint upon the waters cast,
And facile Hope—too prodigal of smiles—
With specious tale each votary beguiles.

The sun sinks coldly in the cheerless west,
And night broods darkly o'er each billow's crest ;
Yet, phantom-like, with parti-coloured eyes,
The great ship glides beneath the cloud-veiled skies
Until, compelled before fair morning's face,
The sullen night withdraws with creeping pace ;
Then roars the blast, and, with redoubled wrath,
Hurls waves enormous in the *London's* path.

Yet onward still, with sharp and plunging bows,
The gallant vessel through their masses ploughs,
Whose curling crests in foaming torrents dash
On flooded deck with never-ceasing splash,
Then through the scuppers forceful spout again
In briny torrents to the parent main.
But see ! A billow of gigantic size
On storm-tried ship like famished monster flies,
And fiercely rends from vessel's side away
A buoyant lifeboat, to its might a prey.
With saddened hearts the tempest-beaten crew
Watch shattered wreck, receding fast from view ;
But, ah ! Alas ! Fresh dangers, thick and fast,
Come crowding on, each greater than the last ;
For as "two bells" proclaim Time's sullen flight,
The ship is hoisted to a giddy height ;

Then headlong down into the trough she dives,
And in the sea her flying-jibboom drives ;
Above her head the whirling waters fly,
While high in air her stern invades the sky :
Thus stricken whale, with tail erected, darts
To 'scape its foes and ease its burning smarts ;
Down, down it dives, then seeks again the air,
Death-dealing lance-thrusts helplessly to bear—
So now the *London* in that awful gale
Impetuous plunges, and the boldest quail
As, closing round, the raging sea assails
Her buried head and tears away her sails :
Masts, yards, and cordage in confusion lie
About the deck, or down to leeward fly ;
Though still aloft the huge fore-topmast swings,
By rigging held, the while beside it hangs
The wrenched-off royal-mast, which joins the foe,
Sweeps as she rolls and deals out blow on blow ;
The shattered jibboom, shorn of taper sail,
In ocean drags, as ally to the gale ;
While tall main royal-mast is also torn
From lofty stand, and of its hamper shorn :
Thus raging tempest, with one stroke, despoils
The luckless ship that struggles in its toils.

Undaunted all will strive the hardy crew
The trailing wreckage from the ship to hew ;
With fruitless aim unnumbered strokes they try ;
From iron cordage glancing axes fly
Like pliant canes that bow before the blast,
Yet mock the danger ere 'tis fairly passed ;

It hangs in loops and, swinging to and fro,
Evades the edge and disappoints each blow ;
While waves prodigious on her cumbered deck
Incessant pour, and seem to claim the wreck.
With hellish fury howls the awful storm
As night descends and veils each seaman's form !

The creeping hours prolong the horrid night,
While those below begin to yield to fright,
And prayers arise from many who, till now,
Their stubborn knees in prayer disdained to bow ;
For though the lamps may brightly burn within,
Too plainly heard becomes the tempest's din ;
While to and fro on wave-scourged, straining deck
The waters dash, obtruding thoughts of wreck—
Of black despair—of dreadful death—and *then*
Of prayer to God ; for so it is with men :
They eat, they drink, they sleep, while all is well ;
Of death they dream not, and they laugh at hell ;
But danger comes, destruction hovers near—
Then, grov'ling low, they rave a useless prayer.

But not so all ; some trustful spirits now,
With steady faith, before their Master bow ;
Or, hopeful, cheer the sinking hearts of those
Whose abject fear but multiplies their woes ;
Whose ears drink in and magnify each sound ;
Who fear destruction from each sea around ;
In vain regret who, moaning, pass the night,
And all-impatient wait the morning's light.

The captain brave, who, true as tempered steel,
Thinks not of sleep, but stationed at the wheel
His watch maintains, exposed to every blast
That sweeps the sea and bows each groaning mast:
With searching eyes he seeks the coming squall
That, sail-destroying, on his ship may fall ;
Or giant wave which, towering o'er the rest,
Comes rushing on with fiercely threatening crest ;
Marks with what force it thunders on his deck,
By fuel cumbered and bestrewn with wreck ;
And in his mind weighs all the chances o'er
Of ever gaining far Australia's shore.
Shall he advance and dare the awful force
Of winds and waters which oppose his course ?
Or shall he turn and, fleeing from the gale,
Some haven seek by aid of steam and sail,
The storm's fell mischief to repair, and wait
Till warring elements their wrath abate ?

To this last view his prudent thoughts incline ;
Yet calls brave Harris that he may combine
That seaman's skill and judgment with his own,
And thus begins, with low and anxious tone—
“ You see the state our storm-vex'd craft is in ;
You hear the tempest's wreck-declaring din ;
You see those seas which, with resounding roar,
On straining decks their mighty volumes pour.
Say, then, shall we 'midst elemental rage
The fellest fury of the storm engage ?
Or, turning, flee and, homeward bound once more,
Seek sheltering harbour by Old England's shore,

Where cordage lost and spars may be replaced,
And all the mischief of the storm effaced ?

The careful seaman in his mind revolves
Each chance and danger either course involves ;
Which, quickly done, he with his chief agrees
That it were wise to leave the stormy seas
For friendly port, wherein their ship may be
Again refitted and prepared for sea.

But ere the task of wearing ship, they go
Their charts to study and their books below ;
Her courses steered, her speed, the leeway
made—

To all attention must be duly paid ;
And these they calculate with nicest care,
Consult the chart, and mark position there ;
Then trust, with fortune, ere two days are o'er
In Plymouth Sound their ship shall ride once
more.

With eager hands the seamen whirl the wheel ;
The plunging ship sweeps round with heavy reel ;
While, fluttering fiercely in the raging blast,
Her mizen-staysails mount from mast to mast ;
O'er tempest's din the seamen's cries resound
As giant yards come slowly sweeping round
To meet wild gusts that, with vindictive sway,
The billows lop and bear their heads away.

Now o'er the waves that pile the troubled main
In sullen gloom the young day dawns again,

While still the elements in sateless wrath
Crowd countless dangers in the vessel's path ;
But, though her hamper is in partial wreck,
And sea's dread legions thunder on her deck,
Her mighty hull, yet proof against the tide,
Contains no water in its dark inside ;
Still unimpaired and shining to the view,
Her toiling engines whirl the forceful screw :
She plunges on, while, careless of the storm,
Her nimble seamen in the rigging swarm,
With weapons keen, intent to cut away
All harmful wreck and injured spars to stay ;
Then set the staysails to each lofty mast,
Now well prepared to wrestle with the blast.

Pale azure rifts the driving clouds divide,
And scattered sunbeams gild the steamer's side,
When, each with sextant in extended hand—
The captain brave and Harris firmly stand—
Through coloured lenses to observe the race
Of day's great chieftain to his turning place,
That marks high noon ; then tell the time and go,
With anxious faces, to the deck below ;
There, on the chart, by measurement to find
Their true position on that sea unkind,
And work the course the *London* must pursue,
If Plymouth Sound they once more wish to
view.

When evening falls the voices of the blast
Proclaim its fury as increasing fast ;

While ghastly crests of still far-distant waves
Arise like ghosts as if from ocean graves ;
Then with the billows, which they fitly crown
'Midst deafening clamour rush tumultuous down
On harassed ship, to scale her bulwarks high,
Invade her decks, and all her hatchways try ;
Then, pouring forth in cataracts, regain
Their raging comrades of the storm again.

Now sable night her densest veil extends
O'er awful scene, and sky with ocean blends
In blackest chaos, whence, with piercing wail,
Terrific squalls the hapless ship assail,
Which, under staysails, wallows in the sea,
While trembling voyagers, on bended knee,
Now mutter prayers, the while they scarcely know
What words are they which from their white lips
flow.

But pious Draper, in his trumpet tones,
Bids them surcease their troubled tears and moans
Exhorting all in humble faith to fly
To HIM who looks with omnipresent eye
Upon His servants, and, with mighty arm,
Can, if He will it, save from every harm.

Thus they below, while overhead the crew,
With doubts increasing, their position view ;
For now two staysails, each with dread report,
Of winds tempestuous become the sport ;

In tattered shreds to leeward they are blown ;
The straining masts reel backward with a groan ;
While raging billows o'er her bulwarks beat,
And storm-vexed mariners to nooks retreat
To 'scape the blast and bitter waves which fly
O'er every part, and leave no corner dry.

But ah ! a billow vaster than the rest,
With force resistless and with foaming crest,
Wrests for its spoil two boats from starboard
side,
And gives their fragments to rapacious tide—
A cutter that—a buoyant lifeboat this—
Their loss adds largely to the great distress,
But respite none the maddening wind allows ;
Its rage remorseless every instant grows,
Till deafening din and force of gale may be
No more augmented to enrage the sea.
In caverns vast the ocean's breast is riven,
And to their depths the hapless ship is driven,
Involved in foam, which lends its ghastly light
To swell the terrors of the awful night ;
Then upward heaved upon stupendous wave,
As though ejected from a yawning grave,
She meets the blast that, with vindictive roar,
Rends all her sails and seems to howl for more.

Still dauntless Martin, to his duty true,
With great example animates the crew ;
Now here, now there, his manly accents sound,
In tones superior to din around ;

And when the sails by awful squalls are rent,
His prompt command to engineers is sent—
Of fuming steam to loose the might again,
That, aided by it, they may stem the main :
Onward she drives, but soon remorseless fate
Hurls fresh disasters of resistless weight
On doomed ship, which, girt with terrors round,
Battles the legions of the vast profound.

Now, as the time by sounding bell is told,
Well may the blood of bravest heart run cold ;
For o'er the gangway, with prodigious weight,
A billow falls and seals the vessel's fate :
Through engine hatch, of stubborn teak and brass,
With iron gratings o'er the stoutest glass,
The waters burst with thunder-waking crash,
And through the breach in foaming torrents dash
Two seamen hurling to the shades below,
Where mimic waves in mimic ocean flow ;
While nothing now of mighty hatch remains,
Save splintered wood, bent bars, and shattered panes !
For as an avalanche down Alpine steeps
From snow-crowned summit with fell fury sweeps,
Trees, rocks, and chalets, in fell ruin hurled,
Are borne before it to the lower world ;
Grim desolation marks it as it flies,
While sullen thunders shake the earth and skies :
So with like fury fell that sea on board,
The hatch burst in and through the chasm
 roared !

Swift to the place the mate and captain fly,
And shout for help ; the trusty crew reply.
With spars and sails the torrent they would stay :
The raging sea sweeps spars and sails away ;
Their bedding—all things portable—they bring,
And booms and ladders o'er the opening fling ;
Yet vainly all such barricades they heap :
With earthquake force implacably the deep
Hurls its vast billows, as in scorn of those
Who would its will with mortal force oppose ;
Their efforts fail ; the water bears away
'Their frail devices to obstruct its way ;
Men, sails, and spars it dashes to and fro,
And pours in torrents to the floods below.

Brave Jones and Greenhill by their engines stand,
While stokers huddle in affrighted band,
And watch the water, with dilated eyes,
Whose deadly volumes round their bodies rise ;
While in their ears resounds the hollow roar
Of wave on wave, which down the hatchway pour.

On deck, meanwhile, brave Martin and his crew
Do all that men with dauntless souls can do ;
Some ply the pumps, the passengers assist,
Heroic Brooke and Woolley swell the list ;
Fearless themselves, what courage they inspire
In those 'gainst whom the elements conspire !
'Midst howling gale and ocean's fiercest strife,
They fight and flinch not, for they fight for life.

When cheerless hours to midnight near approach,
The rising floods on furnaces encroach ;
First hiss the bars, and in a moment more
The vanquished flames expire with splutt'ring
 roar ;

Thick, noisome vapours all below assail,
And gallant Greenhill must convey the tale
Of fell disaster to his captain, who,
By word and action, animates the crew
To vast exertion, when their sinking frames
And hopeless hearts for respite urge their claims.
True to his trust, and lab'ring here and there,
He cheers the weary and defies despair.

Heroic Martin like a stoic hears
The fatal news that Greenhill to him bears
Of vanquished flames, of engines which no more
Will pump the ship or urge her to the shore.
One moment's pause, then to his hardy band
His voice, far-reaching, gives the loud command
To loose the great maintopsail. At the word
Bold British tars, by danger undeterred,
Scale the bleak rigging, and, despite the gale,
Cast loose the buntlines and set free the sail,
Which thunders fiercely in a passing squall
As brawny arms upon its halyard haul.
Up giant mast the great yard slowly creeps,
While hoarse the cry that time for haulage keeps ;
But soon, unyielding to their horny hands,
The stout rope gives not, and the topsail stands.

Ah ! poor success ; for, with the loud report
Of bursting bomb in close-beleaguered fort,
The riven sail from straining boltrope flies,
And torn in ribbons is the tempest's prize.
Well may exclaim the captain 'midst his cares,
“ My gallant fellows, we may say our prayers ! ”
For through the hatchway wave succeeding wave
Resistless pours to sink her in her grave !

Of cheerless night 'tis once again the noon,
And hopeless mortals seek the great saloon
To pray to HIM who now alone has power
To show them mercy in this dreadful hour,
And respite grant if such should be His will ;
For to the tempest HE can say, “ Be still ! ”
And it obeys HIM who of old hath said,
“ Have faith in ME, and be ye not afraid ! ”
To HIM they pray, while Draper's accents sound
Like words of life to kneeling flock around ;
For, faith supported, he is undismayed,
And sees, past death, bright Paradise displayed,
With shining gates that widely open stand
To give glad welcome to believing band.

While Draper prays on ocean-beaten deck,
The seamen toil to save the sinking wreck ;
Strong in despair, the pumps they ply in vain ;
Invading floods on them each moment gain :
The while o'er hatchway gallant fellows strive
To fasten sails, which seas succeeding drive.

Through yawning aperture, as to and fro
Themselves are driven by resistless flow
Of raging waves, which, breaking o'er the rail
On every hand, like ravening wolves assail ;
Veiled in black horrors, Death, in awful form,
Shrieks in the tempest and pervades the storm.

From horrid noontide of that fatal night
Four hopeless hours have slowly winged their
flight,

When fearful billow, with o'erwhelming force,
Through shuttered sternports takes its ruthless
course :

As autumn leaves are snatched from forest trees,
And whisked away on swiftly-passing breeze,
So tears that billow from their fastenings strong
Opposing guards, and tosses them along ;
Seas of salt water through the cabins flow,
And force their way to darksome decks below,
To flood the place where Draper still consoles,
And preaches mercy to repentant souls.

“ Father,” he cries, “ may those who round me bow
In deed and truth become converted now,
And humbly bend beneath Thy chastening rod,
Nor dread Thy call, ‘ Prepare to meet your
God ! ”

Faith over fear the victory hath won ;
“ Father,” we answer, “ ‘ Lord, Thy will be done ! ’ ”

Meanwhile the carpenter, the ports to bar,
Supports strong shutters with a stout spare spar—

A triumph brief—for in the engine-room
Floods swiftly rise and expedite her doom ;
She deeper sinks, and by the stern again
The sea breaks through, with terror in its train ;
Then hurls its billows, wave on wave, within,
With tenfold fury and exultant din.

But as brave soldiers in a fortress pent,
Beset by foes upon their death intent,
With silent valour fight for fame and life,
And falter not in sanguinary strife,
So, all undaunted, still the seamen toil
To wrest from ocean its expected spoil ;
Prompt to obey where duty's call commands,
They struggle on in two unflinching bands :
This, with the captain, strive with efforts vast
To bar the hatch—courageous to the last ;
But efforts all are now of scant avail ;
Their best devices and their labours fail,
For ocean's cohorts—gale incited—leap
Through fatal breach to swell the volumes deep
Of rising floods, which in her darkly flow
To force their prey to wreck-strewn deeps below ;
Till Martin owns, yet with reluctant pain,
No cheering hope can in his breast remain.

But still he calls, when he regains the deck,
To toiling men who would the leakage check,
“ Forbear that labour, and combine with me
To bar the hatchway to invading sea ;

Which, could we do, perchance we yet might
save

Ourselves and vessel from impending grave !”
They throng around, they answer to his call ;
But vain their courage—vain endeavours all—
For cruel waves their labours vast confound,
And beat those heroes on the wreck around ;
The ocean mocks them, hope flies every heart,
And Death but lingers ere he hurls his dart.

While thus those strive the others pump and bale,
Their shrinking forms exposed to biting gale.
Here Woolley cheers, there Grant and others
toil

To frustrate fate and ocean’s fury foil ;
There, too, is Brooke who, on the mimic stage,
Has fear affected, hope, despair, and rage,
But now, undaunted, on the stage of life
Heroic stands ’midst elemental strife
Which round him roars. He sees huge waves
descend

On sinking ship, as if at once to end
The awful struggle ; sees the sails all torn
In ragged shreds and on the tempest borne ;
Sees helpless shipmates driven o’er the side
To Death’s embraces ’neath relentless tide ;
And knows the ship in ocean’s deadly toils
Must soon be added to its garner’d spoils ;
Yet, with brave heart and stern, unflinching will,
Remains undaunted and collected still.

With naked feet and head to tempest bare,
He seems all-present, aiding here and there :
From cabin first the floods he strives to bale,
That, surely rising, threat its inmates pale ;
Then at the pumps is he a host indeed
To give relief to those who respite need ;
Himself he spares not, but toils bravely on,
Till all may see that no more can be done ;
Then stands aside, and soon his musing brain
His chequered life recalls to him again
His home, his friends, his joys and troubles past,
Its summons answer, thronging thick and fast ;
His careless childhood, his maturer years,
Their lights and shadows, mingled hopes and
fears :

All join to stir alternately his heart ;
Yet tears unmanly to his eyes ne'er start :
So hours drag on, and still he silent stands,
His visage resting on supporting hands,
As, leaning on the half-companion door
He views the scene and hears the tempest's roar,
Awaiting calmly till his soul shall be
By rushing waters from his frame set free.

In last grand character he now appears
A man superior to human fears ;
Then honour give where deathless fame is due,
And drop a tear when bidding Brooke adieu !

To longing eyes of voyagers forlorn
From eastern portals breaks the pallid morn ;

But impotent the harbinger of day
To scare the terrors of the night away ;
For, like foul vultures flocking to the slain
On desert sands or war-ensanguined plain,
Unnumbered dangers—harpy-winged—appear
To tell too truly of destruction near,
And hover round, the last faint hope to scare
From human hearts fast yielding to despair ;
For in the ocean—level with her deck—
The helpless vessel is a sinking wreck,
Waves rolling o'er her in their ruthless course,
As, bent on carnage, rush the charging horse.
'Twixt rival floods the *London* barely floats—
'Tis speedy death or rescue by the boats !

Ah ! feeble hope ! for four alone remain—
The rest are swallowed in the raging main ;
But these, prepared, have soon a scanty load
Of bread and water in their depths bestowed.
Then first the pinnacle on the starboard side
They fain would trust on ocean's fatal tide ;
For fifty men the roomy craft will bear,
If blessed by Providence and launched with care.

Six seamen enter as the side she leaves,
To be assaulted by the leaping waves,
Towards which she glides, o'erwhelm'd to quickly be,
And straightway swallow'd by insatiate sea.
She headlong dives, and, vanishing from view,
To ocean's fury leaves her luckless crew ;

But waves, o'er-ravenous, disgorge the men
In sorry plight upon the deck again—
A respite merely from destructions maw,
Like that of mouse from grim grimalkin's paw.

Now toil-spent crew and passengers refrain
From painful toils they feel to be in vain,
And, hopeless all, to great saloon descend,
As if in company their lives to end ;
And here the captain, with a solemn air,
For painful death exhorts them to prepare,
Which awful warning they in silence hear ;
For no loud outcries own their birth to fear.
Then to the place where Draper prays aloud
They move, a pallid but collected crowd,
And to the Deity ascends once more
United prayer amid the tempest's roar.

'Tis noon again upon that stormy sea,
Of hope devoid as blackest night could be ;
Still in the ship the fatal waters rise,
And ocean clamours to engulf its prize.
Around her stern the greedy eddies swirl,
And mighty billows o'er her bulwarks curl,
When mate and captain make one effort more
To launch a boat that some may reach the shore ;
King, Grant, and Daniels aid with willing hands,
And brave young Angel by his engine stands,
Ready to hoist her o'er the vessel's side,
And drop her lightly on the seething tide.
By failure warned, three men alone descend

Within the boat, from off the side to fend
Their tiny ark, which seems as if 'twould be
At once engulfed within the raging sea ;
But, like a cork upon the ocean cast—
Her sides too low to catch the howling blast—
She rises buoyantly on billows high,
From horrid depths to where the surges fly ;
But as destruction seems to claim her, few
Seek to augment the number of her crew,
But cling in groups upon the sea-lashed deck,
And wait destruction with the sinking wreck.

To Greenhill now brave Martin gives command
To leave the ship and head the hardy band,
Which, nimbly springing o'er a chasm wide,
The cutter gains from sinking vessel's side—
An awful leap ! but desperation lends
A stern resolve that far mere strength transcends ;
For nerves and sinews in the human kind
Are urged and governed by the mighty mind.
“Go,” Martin cries, “the cutter is your care,
And, though not likely, may in safety bear
You through the tempest ; as for me I stay,
My evil fortune's hard demands to pay ;
For, with my passengers, in death I'll sleep,
By vessel's wreck, in soundings dark and deep.”
Meanwhile, below, the pious Draper still
Exhorts compliance with the heavenly will :
“Prepare !” he cries, “Prepare at once to meet
The Great Creator at the judgment seat !

Your hour is near ! Repent ! repent ! before
The fatal floods annihilation pour
In wrath upon you ! There is now no hope,
Saith our good captain, with the storm to cope ;
Yet with the penitent the hope remains
Of life for ever where Jehovah reigns ! ”
The faithful wife beside her husband stands,
With quiet eyes and meekly folded hands,
Buoyed by her faith, she sees the waves encroach,
Yet falters not at dreadful Death’s approach ;
But, thoughtful still, her sympathetic heart
Can feel for those who from the wreck depart.

“ Take this,” she cries, as to a seaman bold
She gives her rug ; “ ’twill shield you from the cold ; ”
Nor brooks denial when, with manly mind,
In her own need excuses he would find ;
But, steadfast still, his scruples she o’errides :
Her will—not his—the argument decides.

What trump of fame shall adequately sound
The praise of him, by truest honour bound,
Who with his dear ones firmly takes his stand—
In grasp of Death an undivided band ;
And who, when waters on the leeward side
Rapacious roll in fast-increasing tide,
Unshaken answers o’er-persuasive friend,
Who, with entreaties, seeks his soul to bend,
“ Go, haste yourself the saving boat to gain,
My promise made, with these will I remain ;
No tempting words shall shake my steadfast heart ;
Not even Death our faithful love shall part.

Your hand *once* more : a long, a last farewell !
And be it yours lamenting friends to tell
That he they mourn, with wife and children, died
With firmest faith as his eternal guide.”
Then silence falls, and Wilson speeds away,
Man’s strongest instinct eager to obey,
And hails the boat ; but now its crew declare
That it another fugitive will bear.”
“Haste ! bring a lady !” is the seamen’s cry.
He pauses not for parley or reply,
But searches round, yet searches all in vain
For one, alas ! he ne’er may see again ;
When, as his life may with lost moment fly,
He questions quickly one who lingers by
If she for life will cast with them her lot ?
She looks compliance, though she answers not.
In lusty arms he bears her to the rail ;
She shrinks in horror from the sea and gale.
Ah ! fatal fear ! he can no longer wait,
So leaves the maiden and the ship to fate.

A midshipman now looks with longing eyes,
And for admission to the crew applies.
They answer “ Yes ! ” He leaps the chasm o’er,
And hungry billows for him vainly roar ;
Then Jones—last fugitive from fated bark—
From bulwark bounds, and gains the tossing ark.
“ Come, captain, come ! ” the eager seamen call ;
But death approaching cannot him appal ;
To all entreaties he replies “ No ! No !
At duty’s call down with my ship I’ll go,

That none, with justice, shall in future say,
'He, scared by danger, did his trust betray.'
My hapless passengers remain, and I—
A British seaman—with my charge will die !
Your course is nor-nor-east to Brest, and here,
Catch you this compass, by its aid to steer,
With God's good blessing, safely to the land.
Good-bye ! Good-bye !" and waving high his hand,
A farewell sad he signals to the men,
Who thus, in thought, shall see him oft again ;
Then on his ship, now sinking in the sea,
Awaits the time when all engulfed shall be.

But as the cutter leaves the sinking wreck,
A woman's voice re-echoes from its deck,
And o'er the rail a livid face appears,
The starting eyes exhausted of their tears.
With gestures wild those seamen she would stay—
Her soul to anguish and despair a prey—
Then shrieks the offer, o'er the tempest's din,
"A thousand guineas if you take me in !"
But no response goes back against the blast,
For now the die, the fatal die, is cast ;
Not all the world a moment's pause would buy :
For *life* they struggle ; she must helpless die !

From puny boat the members of its crew
The final struggles of the *London* view ;
For high in air ascend her giant bows,
As o'er her stern the ravening billows close ;

While from below the air—till now close pent—
Through bursting decks gives all its fury vent,
To drive the voyagers, with awful force,
Towards the prow in its tempestuous course.
Down ! down ! she plunges, and the waters sweep
Round horrid vortex in the riven deep,
Whence, madly shrill, a wild, heart-rending cry
The tempest pierces to the frowning sky ;
When rushing waters, closing o'er their prey,
Hide the sad victims from the face of day :
They sink for ever, and the stormy blast
Raves a wild requiem as it hurtles past !



TO MY READER.

In reference to the foregoing metrical version of "*The Last Voyage of the London*," I have to tell you that one stern newspaper critic affirmed that I had in it totally destroyed the thread of the narrative, and I must say was not at all careful whether he hurt my feelings or no. On the other hand, Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, with whom I had a slight travelling acquaintanceship, wrote—"I was not aware that you were one of the survivors of the *London*, and yet I cannot imagine any one writing the account of the wreck as you have done unless he had actually been there." Captain Hector, also, a well-known and much-trusted commander of the P. & O. Service, to whom I lent a book containing "*The Last Voyage of the London*," said, when returning it—"I could not put your book down till I had finished the wreck of the *London*. I could fancy myself there." Now either the admiral and captain were totally ignorant of nautical matters, or else the paper man was. My dear reader I will leave you to determine that question.—ROBT. BRUCE.



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